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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE MEANINGS AND ACTIONS OF PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISORS

BY

LESTER CORLEY MCELWAIN

(C)

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Although instructional supervision is a term that has been often referred to by past and present educators, there remains a cloud of uncertainty and a lack of agreement about what the notion actually means. The purpose of this study was to enhance the understanding of this concept by exploring the meanings and actions of eight principals as instructional supervisors.

This exploration was a non-experimental, descriptive study which used semi-structured, in-depth, interviews to collect the data. The free-flowing discussion during the interviews allowed the researcher to clarify and extend the information provided by the respondents, enhancing the descriptive data. Data analysis was on-going throughout the study, and follow-up contacts confirmed the trustworthiness of the data.

The complexity and all-encompassing nature of instructional supervision was represented by the variety of perspectives that the principals offered as they related their understanding of the concept. Principals discussed students needs, having a vision or mission, teacher/ principal interaction, teacher/student interaction, curriculum, professional development, and the involvement of others when sharing their meanings of the instructional supervision. Principals also viewed their preformed attitudes, skills, and knowledge, varying contexts and interaction with others as being influential in shaping their meaning of the concept.

Their understanding of the term was manifested by their diverse and numerous actions as instructional supervisors: observing and being observed, clarifying goals and expectations, facilitating teachers and instruction, planning and organizing and encouraging the involvement of others. Additionally, the notions of time, isolation, staff, and the system were discussed as being constraints and/or enhancers of the effectiveness of

principals as instructional supervisors. Principals concluded the interviews by describing their successes or non-successes in terms of measurable results, programs, and growth or non-growth of students and staff.

Themes incorporating the notions of personal philosophy, the needs of the students, growth, teacher/ principal relationships, instructional supervision as an affective activity, and the open, dynamic nature of the process were identified from the descriptive findings. To conclude, the research recognized the concept of instructional supervision as a highly complex, value-laden, integrative construct, and provided insight about how principals experienced their roles as instructional supervisors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		Page
1.	The Problem	1
	Introduction	1
	Purpose of the Study	2
	Significance of the Study	3
	Definitions of Terms	4
	Assumptions	4
	Delimitations	5
	Limitations	5
	Organization of the Thesis	6
2.	Review of the Literature	7
	Introduction	7
	Perspectives on Supervision	7
	The Supervisor in The Supervisory Process	14
	Supervisory Tasks	15
	Supervisory Prerequisites	19
	Relationships	22
	Supervisory Options	26
	Clinical Supervision	26
	Supportive Supervision	27
	Ego-Counselling	28
	Self-Appraisal	28
	Individualized Professional Development	29

Informal Supervision 29
Staff Development and Inservice 31
Peer Supervision 31
Collaboration 32
Cooperative Professional Development 32
Summary 33
Conceptual Framework 35
3. Research Design 39
Introduction 39
Research Design 39
Instrument Development 40
Data Collection 40
Data Sources- Selection and Contact 41
Data Trustworthiness 43
Data Analysis 44
Summary 45
4. Analysis of the Data 46
Introduction 46
Principals' Meaning of Instructional Supervision 46
Actions of Principals as Instructional Supervisors 52
Observing Others and Being Observed 53
Clarifying Goals and Expectations 56
Facilitating Teachers and Instruction 58
Planning and Organizing 60
Encouraging the Involvment of Others 61

Working With Teachers 64
The Beginning Teacher 64
Orientation 65
Support, Patience, and Positive Interaction 66
The Excellent Teacher 67
Showing Appreciation/Giving Goodies 67
Respect and Support 69
The Teacher in Crisis 70
Recognizing the Problem 71
Utilizing a Process 72
Beyond the Process 73
The Retiring Teacher 74
Experiencing Difficulties 74
Not Experiencing Difficulties 76
Influences on Meanings and Actions 77
Attitudes, Skills, Experiences 77
Expectations of Self and Others 80
Contexts 81
Enhancers and Constraints 82
Time 82
Isolation 84
Staff 85
The System 87
Successes and Non-Successes 89
Successes 89

Non-Successes 94
Summary 97
5. Themes Derived From the Data 99
Introduction 99
A Philosophical Foundation 99
Serving the Needs of the Students 100
The Notion of Growth 103
Teacher/Principal Relationships 104
An Affective Activity 107
An Open, Dynamic, Adaptive Process 108
Summary 110
6. Summary, Reflections, and Implications 112
Introduction 112
Summary 112
Purpose of the Study 112
Research Design 113
Summary of the Major Findings 114
Summary of the Themes 117
Personal Reflections 118
On the Literature 118
Principals- High Wire Performers 120
In Search of the Elusive Term 122
The Student- A Silent Partner 123
Implications for Practice and Future Research 124
For Practice 124

For Future Research 126

Concluding Statement 127

References 128

Appendices

A. Correspondence 133

B. Interview Guide Questions 151

C. Sample Transcript 153

D. Sample Journal Notations 158

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
1. Dwyer's (1984) Model of Instructional Management	36
2. Conceptual Framework	38

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The recognition of the concept of supervision as being an integral part of the educational process has been evident from the time the Dorian Greeks appointed a Paidinomous to supervise the training of their students in the eighth century B.C. Since that time, due to changing societal and educational conditions and beliefs, the notion of educational supervision has been subjected to considerable debate and has been interpreted and enacted in a variety of ways.

Recently, in an era of accountability, emphasis has been placed upon student learning outcomes and therefore the entire instructional process has become a central focus of attention. The pedagogic interaction between the teacher and the student remains the primary activity within this process, but what has emerged from studies on effective schools is a recognition of the considerable impact that principals can have on student performance when they become actively involved in the instructional process. Consequently, renewed interest and attention has been given to the area of instructional supervision.

The 1988 School Act of Alberta reflects this renewed attention to the principal as an instructional supervisor. Section 15 defines nine duties of the school principal, many of them having instructional and supervisory implications:

> A principal of a school must
>
> a) provide instructional leadership in the school;
> b) ensure that the instruction provided by the teachers employed in the school is consistent with the courses of study and education programs prescribed, approved or authorized pursuant to this Act;

> c) evaluate or provide for the evaluation of programs offered in the school;
> d) direct the management of the school;
> e) maintain order and discipline in the school and on the school grounds and during activities sponsored or approved by the board;
> f) promote cooperation between the school and the community that it serves;
> g) supervise the evaluation and advancement of students;
> h) evaluate or provide for the evaluation of the teachers employed in the school;
> i) subject to any applicable collective agreement and the principal's contract of employment, carry out those duties that are assigned to the principal by the board (p. 14).

It is evident that the components of leadership, community involvement, and supervision and evaluation of program, teachers, and students have been incorporated into law as being part of a school principal's responsibility. It therefore appears to be of significance to understand how practising principals have interpreted their newly defined responsibilities as instructional supervisors and to know how they enact these meanings. It is the intent of this study to contribute to knowledge in these areas.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the meanings that principals had for the notion of instructional supervision and to discover how they enacted their role as instructional supervisors.

A number of specific questions served to guide the development of the study and the analysis of the data. The questions were as follows:

1. What meanings do principals give to the notion of instructional supervision?

2. What do principals as instructional supervisors do to enact the meanings that they hold for instructional supervision?

3. What influences help to shape the meanings and actions that principals demonstrate in their instructional supervisory role?

4. What conditions enhance or constrain the effectiveness of principals as instructional supervisors.

5. In what circumstances do principals perceive themselves as being most successful as instructional supervisors? Least successful?

6. What issues are embedded in the meanings and actions of the principals as instructional supervisors?

Signifcance of the Study

This study has both practical and theoretical significance. Consequently, the results should be of interest to principals, teachers, researchers and senior administrators and policy-makers.

For policy-makers and senior administrators the study provides an awareness as to how policies have been interpreted and put into practice at the school level. This awareness may translate into modified policy to reinforce or assist principals in their supervisory endeavours.

The study may also yield beneficial insight for principals and teachers. By examining the practices of others, principals may use the information provided as a basis for examining their own supervisory behavior. Through this type of reflection, principals may confirm, reinforce, question, modify, and perhaps change their behavior with the desired result being that of improved supervisory practice. Teachers, being a very important interactive part of the supervisory process , may also find that the study provides them with an empathic understanding of the principal's role in this process. This type of understanding may enhance relationships between supervisors and teachers resulting in improved instructional and supervisory practices.

The study's contribution to the literature is its grounding in supervisory practice as it is presently being undertaken in our schools today. As well, the study also has potential for identification of issues which suggest that further investigation may be worthwhile. Consequently, the study may be of interest to those who conduct educational research.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions have been used:

Meaning: This term refers to how principals understand, or interpret a concept.

Actions: This term refers to the activities and behaviors of principals; what they do as instructional supervisors.

Supervisor: This term was viewed as being synonomous with the term principal.

Teacher in Crisis: Refers to a teacher who is experiencing inordinate difficulties with the task of teaching.

The Excellent Teacher: Refers to a teacher who has outstanding teaching skills that allow him/her to be highly competent in the task of teaching.

The Beginning Teacher: Refers to a teacher in his/her first year of teaching.

The Teacher Near Retirement: Refers to a teacher in his/her last one or two years of teaching before retirement.

Assumptions

From the literature and from my own experience, a major assumption made was that instructional supervision is a complex, multi-faceted process which can be interpreted and enacted in a variety of different ways. This assumption parallels the philosophical

underpinnings of phenomenology which holds that there are multiple ways in which humans interpret their experiences, and it is the subjective meaning of these experiences that constitutes reality (Bogdan & Biklen,1982).

A third assumption was that I had sufficient skill as a researcher to obtain accurate and meaningful information from my respondents. I also assumed that the respondents had the ability and desire to recall, reflect upon, and share their thoughts and feelings on the topic.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to eight practising principals from one system. The size of the respondent group allowed me to conduct extensive, in-depth interviews with each participant. The study was also delimited to the time periods specified in the data collection procedure. Because of the size of the respondent group and the method of gathering information, generalizations were not developed. Generalizability to other principals in other school settings should be made with caution.

Limitations

An interpretive study utilizing interviews has inherent limitations. A major limitation was my ability to establish a rapport with the respondents to allow for open, honest responses. This rapport can affect both the quality and quantity of the response. By selecting respondents who were familiar to me, it was hoped that this limitation would be overcome. However, this aspect of familiarity held the possibility of giving rise to a second limitation, that of bias; on behalf of the researcher and the respondent. The

previous interaction between the respondents and myself potentially could have affected the accuracy of the data given. This limitation was considered throughout by utilization of triangulation, peer debriefing, use of referential adequacy materials, and member checks as described by Guba and Lincoln (1982). In recognizing this limitation, I felt that the benefits of familiarity between the respondent and myself outweighed the possible influence of bias.

A third limitation was the ability of the respondents to recall information and to articulate their thoughts and feelings. However, this concern was addressed by giving them ample time for reflection during the interview and by providing opportunities for them to view and confirm the data provided in the transcripts of the interviews.

A final limitation was that of my ability to conduct an in-depth interview and gather, report, and interpret resulting information. The experience gained in the pilot interview and additional interviews as part of my research methods course served to enhance my skills in this area.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter One has introduced the nature of the problem and the purpose and significance of the study. Chapter Two contains literature pertaining to differing perspectives on instructional supervision, the supervisor in the supervisory process, supervisory prerequisites, the importance of relationships and various supervisory practices. The research design, data collection techniques, and research procedures are outlined in Chapter Three. Chapter Four presents an analysis of the data obtained, and this is followed in Chapter Five by a discussion of the themes that emerged from the content analysis. Chapter Six, the final chapter of the thesis, provides a summary of the study, my personal reflections, and implications for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Interest in the topic of supervision in education has inspired considerable research and resultant literature. The purpose of this chapter is to share those portions of the literature that are relevant to the topic of the principal and instructional supervision. The first section of this review presents various perspectives on supervision in education, including a brief historical overview; however, the major emphasis is on contemporary understandings of the topic. In the second section, the supervisor's (principal's) role in the supervisory process is explored and the perceived tasks, prerequisite skills and important aspects of relationships are presented. The third section reviews a variety of supervisory practices that are available for the supervisor within the instructional process and the chapter culminates with the provision of a conceptual framework.

Perspectives on Educational Supervision

Most researchers view the concept of supervision as being an evolving one, and therefore their contemporary perspectives and definitions of supervision are usually preceded by an historical overview which provides a context from which their ideas developed. For example, Wiles & Bondi (1986) outline the evolution of supervisory roles in the United States during the last 135 years:

1850-1910	Inspection and enforcement
1910-1920	Scientific supervision
1920- 1930	Bureaucratic supervision
1930-1955	Cooperative supervision
1955-1965	Supervision as curriculum development
1965-1970	Clinical Supervision
1970-1980	Supervision as management
1980-	Management of instruction (p. 7)

This historical sketch leads them to arrive at their own definition of supervision which states, "We see supervision as a general leadership function that coordinates and manages those school activities concerned with learning" (p. 10).

Marks, Stoops, and King-Stoops (1985) illustrate a similar historical pattern and describe earlier traditional supervision as being poorly planned and authoritarian. They contrast the traditional practice of inspection to modern supervision, which they describe as being objective, systematic, democratic, creative, growth-centered, and productive. By distinguishing supervision from administration on the basis of purpose of the activity, they arrive at the proposition that "any activity that is primarily concerned with improving classroom instruction can be viewed as a supervisory activity" (p.14) .

Doll (1983) describes the development of philosophies of supervision as moving from inspection (1800-1920), to scientific supervision (1920-1940), to democratic supervision (1940-1960), to neoscientific supervision (1970-1980). He then describes his view of supervision for the 1980's and beyond--the concept of vitalization. He views the fundamental purpose of educational supervision as being the development of school staffs; increasing the confidence and competence of teachers, and helping teachers to maintain a high level of motivation and interest.

Glickman (1985) describes three supervisory philosophies (essentialism, experimentalism, and existentialism) and three approaches to supervisory practice (directive, collaborative, and non-directive). He combines these three philosophies of

supervision with the three approaches to derive his own supervisory platform, which he labels developmental supervision. He bases his platform on the premise that human development is the aim of education and puts forth the following propositions:

> Proposition 1: Supervisors should use a variety of practices that emanate from various philosophies and belief structures with developmental directionality in mind. Directive, collaborative, and nondirective supervisory approaches are all valid as long as they aim to increase teacher self-control.
>
> Proposition 2: As supervisors gradually increase teacher choice and control over instructional improvement, teachers will become more abstract and committed to improvement, and a sense of ethos or of a cause beyond oneself will emerge (p. 86).

Ben Harris (1985) views supervision within the context of the total school operation which he represents as a grid consisting of two critical dimensions: instruction-relatedness and pupil relatedness. Within this framework he differentiates supervision as being a functional area that is highly instruction-related and only remotely pupil-related. Supervision is seen as providing supporting services to the teaching function of highly instruction-related kinds. He defines supervision,"what school personnel do with *adults* and *things* to maintain or change the school operation in ways that *directly* influence the teaching processes employed to promote pupil learning" (p. 10).

Alfonso, Firth, and Neville (1981) view the concept of supervision as being one behavioral system (instructional supervisory behavior) of many, within context of an educational organization. They state "such a concept presumes the existence of a set of appropriate behaviors that can be identified and analyzed, and that lend themselves to the development of testable hypotheses. The focus of this approach is on supervision, not on the supervisor; on behavior, not on the person and the functional tasks assigned to him by the organization" (pp. 41-42). Within this conceptual framework, they present their definition of instructional supervision as, "Behaviour officially designated by the

organization that directly affects teacher behavior in such a way as to facilitate pupil learning and achieve the goals of the organization" (p. 43).

Pfeiffer and Dunlap (1982) review theories of supervision and suggest that no one theory is generally accepted. Citing Pfeiffer (1978), they describe the three orientations : humanistic--valuing people and process, technological--valuing program and product, and managerial--valuing power and position. They suggest that supervisors function using combinations of these based on the value systems of those involved. They view supervision as being a process of interaction in which an individual or individuals work with teachers to improve instruction with the ultimate goal being better student learning.

Oliva (1984) describes four approaches to the concept of supervision-- inspection, scientific management, laissez-faire, and group dynamics and concludes that none of these approaches are adequate in themselves for today's schools. He examines definitions presented by considered specialists in the field of supervision (Harris, 1975; Alfonso, Firth & Neville, 1981; and Lovell & Wiles, 1983) and identifies three themes prevalent in their writings: (1) a focus on behavior of supervisors, (2) in assisting teachers, (3) for the ultimate benefit of the student. He uses these themes to develop his own definition of supervision:

> Supervision as presented in this text, is conceived as a service to teachers, both as individuals and in groups. To put it simply, supervision is a means of offering to teachers specialized help in improving instruction. The words *service* and *help* should be underscored and they are use repeatedly in this text (p.9).

He narrows the focus of the concept of supervision by separating the concept of instructional supervision from educational supervision and general supervision. Instructional supervision is confined by a more limited set of responsibilities. He sees the concepts of clinical, consultative, and developmental supervision as being subsumed under

instructional supervision, but administrative supervision is not included as it covers the territory of managerial responsibilities outside the fields of curriculum and instruction.

In their writings on educational supervision, Sergiovanni and Starratt (1983) mention three former supervisory theories-traditional scientific management, human relations, and neoscientific management- and then present their image of supervision which they refer to as human resources supervision. Human resources supervision is aimed at the human and professional growth of the people in the school, and the human resources supervisor views satisfaction as a desirable end toward which teachers will work. Within this image, there is an active, open partnership between and among students, teachers, and supervisors. The assumption is that the supervisor would adopt shared decision-making practices resulting in increased school effectiveness, and in turn, this successful accomplishment of important and meaningful work will lead to increased teacher satisfaction.

In a more recent work, Sergiovanni (1987) presents a reflective practice of supervision which is characterized by the view that no one best way exists to teach; the corollary being, there is no one best way to supervise. Citing Glatthorn (1984) and Glickman (1981), he advocates a differentiated system of supervision that provides teachers with an array of options and formats from which they may choose, and also provides for different supervisory techniques in recognition of the need for a variety of teaching and learning styles:

> At the heart of this view of supervision is the notion that teachers have work goals that are important to them. Given the opportunity, they will work very hard at achieving them. The nature of these goals is influenced by growth stages, cognitive complexity levels, learning styles, and motives that teachers bring to school. Supervisory options and styles should respond to these differences among teachers, for such responsiveness makes it easier for work goals to be realized. In this sense supervision is little more than a system of help for teachers as they achieve goals that they consider important. Principals are needed to provide help as this process unfolds (p. 225).

This system of supervision should function within and be comprised of the school's purposes, educational and management platforms, and other dimensions of the school's culture.

In recent years, the term instructional supervision has given way to the term instructional leadership, perhaps to acknowledge the trend towards guiding and facilitating teachers towards personal and professional growth and to move away from the directive connotations that the term supervision can suggest. However, the change in the label has not led to greater precision or agreement about the definition of the concept, and many different understandings have been offered. Greenfield (1987) remarks in reference to the principal as an instructional leader,

> However, the concept itself is ambiguous and does not adequately reflect the actual character of much of the work that a school principal must do. It fails to capture the other dimensions of the principal's role, and suggests a view of the principalship that is out of touch with the reality of schools as complex and contextually embedded organizations (p. xii).

Dwyer (1984) in his "search for instructional leadership" found "no single image or simple formula for successful instructional leadership"(p. 33). However, what he did discover was a subtle and routine aspect of instructional leadership:

> We did find principals engaged in effective, routine acts that required no new programs, innovations, or extensive changes in their roles. Their successes hinged on their capacity to connect these routine activities to their overarching perspectives of the contexts of their schools and their aspirations for their students (p. 33).

Albrecht (1988) recognizes a different aspect of educational leadership. He focusses on the teacher/student interaction and says,

> In the final analysis, real leaders know that educational leadership, properly understood, begins and ends with a proper regard for the integrity and professionalism of teachers, whose efforts cause the work of the organization to get done; and a firm belief that the work of the organization is to help youngsters learn something of value and how to use it. . . . It is where teachers and students come together to undertake that mission that educational leadership must ultimately be judged (p. 33).

Nickerson and Mook (1988) stress school and community relations as being "another aspect of instructional leadership":

> The following words look at working with the community and positively influencing the curriculum through the instructional leadership offered by the principal. At all times it is important to remember that this is a two-way street--visibility of the school in the community and stressing to community members that they and their views are welcome in the school (pp. 44,45).

Rallis (1988) attempts to offer a comprehensive understanding of instructional leadership that emphasizes interaction with teachers. She sees the instructional leader as:

> Someone who speaks for teachers, establishes the direction of instruction, knows and interprets research findings, demonstrates and explains "best" practices, takes risks in instruction, works well with and supports teachers, encourages sharing, spreads a sense of where the school is headed instructionally, and helps teachers assist and evaluate their impact (p. 644).

With this view of instructional leadership in mind, she then states that "the best instructional leaders must also be managers to some extent, but the roles of manager and of instructional leader should generally be discrete. One individual cannot effectively perform both roles simultaneously" (p. 644). She views the issues of instructional leadership and teacher empowerment as being interwoven and therefore concludes that "instructors are the logical pool from which to draw instructional leaders" (p. 645).

After reviewing much of the literature on instructional leadership, Flath (1989) recognizes the complexity and magnitude of the concept when she says, "When instructional leadership is recognized as a complex construct, the role of the principal, which in many school systems currently includes the instructional-leadership role, becomes an onerous task (p. 48). Although she is not as specific as Rallis (1988) in recommending that teachers should assume responsibility for instructional leadership, she does offer the alternative perspective of "shared instructional leadership" as a means of addressing the "onerous task" of a principal as an instructional leader.

Upon examination of various perspectives and definitions regarding supervision, it is apparent that the notion of supervision in education has undergone and continues to undergo a process of evolution. There is not as yet, a quintessential definition to which all subscribe. However, Lewis Jr.'s (1987) comment is representative of some commonalities that are evident in contemporary thought: "Gone are the days in which the principal oversees the operations of the school by evaluating, monitoring and supervising the instructional program as well as the teachers" (p.163). He recommends changes in the supervisor's outlook from that of controlling to enabling: that support replace overseeing, responsibility replace prerogatives, proaction replace reaction, change agent replace manipulator, visible management replace secluded management, philosophizing replace administrating, cooperation replace adversity, and people-orientation replace authority-orientation. Supervision for today's schools is a very complex, multi-facted process that goes beyond mere inspection, with emphasis now being placed on the interaction between the supervisor and the teacher to provide for their growth and development, thus resulting in benefits for the learner.

The Supervisor in the Supervisory Process

Glickman (1985) states that "supervision is viewed as a process and function, not a particular position or person" (p. 6). Much of the literature on educational supervision discusses the term supervisor in this sense and it could mean superintendents , assistant superintendents, coordinators, department heads, directors, consultants, principals, assistant principals and master teachers. However, Sergiovanni (1987) states that "principals are responsible for the school's supervisory programs" (p.161). Marks, Stoops & King-Stoops (1985) contend that "the principals job is to fulfill the objectives for

the school's supervisory program. . . this means that the principal is the chief supervisory officer" (pp. 13,15). Because the focus of this study concerns the principal as supervisor, the two are viewed as being synonymous. Having looked at different perspectives in relation to supervision, it now becomes useful to examine the literature to see what tasks, skills, and relationships are seen as being associated with the supervisor in this process.

Supervisory Tasks

The all-encompassing duties or tasks of a supervisor become apparent when one examines ten tasks of supervision as enumerated by Harris (1985):

Task 1: Developing curriculum
Task 2: Organizing for instruction
Task 3: Providing staff
Task 4: Providing facilities
Task 5: Providing materials
Task 6: Arranging for in-service education
Task 7: Orienting staff members
Task 8: Relating special pupil services
Task 9: Developing public relations
Task 10: Evaluating Instruction (pp. 10-12)

Harris categorizes the tasks as being preliminary (tasks 2,3,4), operational (tasks 1,5,7,8,9), or developmental (tasks 6,10).

Marks, Stoops, and King-Stoops (1985) state that the role of the supervisor today is action and experimentation aimed at improving instruction and the instructional program, and suggest seven ways in which the supervisor can become involved in instructional improvement. They are:

1. Sharing ideas, procedures, and materials in order to evaluate and develop the curriculum.
2. Developing materials and procedures to implement the curriculum.
3. Planning for instructional improvement through in-service education, institutes, research, workshops, and projects--a systems approach to staff and instructional development.
4. Organizing a staff of professional specialist-consultants.
5. Directing teachers toward goals through democratic processes by supplying specific directions based on a sound background in individual and group dynamics.

6. Allowing-- indeed encouraging--teachers to participate in planning and organization.
7. Evaluating curriculum, materials, and procedures in the light of basic objectives, best practice, and the findings of scientific research (pp. 12-13).

Glickman (1985) sees the supervisory tasks that have potential to affect teacher development as being

1. Direct Assistance- providing personal on-going contact with the individual teacher to observe and assist in classroom instruction.
2. Curriculum development- revising and modifying of the content, plans, and materials of classroom instruction,
3. In-service education- providing the legally sanctioned and supported learning opportunities to faculty by the school and school system.
4. Group development- gathering together teachers to make decisions on mutual instructional concerns.
5. Action research- faculty systematically studying what is happening in the classroom and school with the aim of improving learning (p. 257).

Other writers (Oliva,1985; Pfeiffer & Dunlap,1982) have categorized the tasks of the supervisor into broader catagories. For example, Oliva sees four roles for the supervisor: (1) the coordinator--of programs, groups, materials, and reports, (2) the consultant--as a specialist in curriculum, instructional methodology, and staff development, (3) the group leader--working to release the potential of others, (4) the evaluator--assessment of strengths and weaknesses and assisting teachers in their endeavours to improve. Pfeiffer & Dunlap have narrowed the tasks of the supervisor down to three major areas of changing teacher behavior, modifying curriculum, and restructuring the learning environment.

Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) and Roe and Drake (1980) describe the job of the principal by dividing it into two broad categories: administrative-managerial emphasis and the educational leadership emphasis. The educational and instructional leadership emphasis is concerned with (1) changing the behaviour of those involved in teaching-learning acts aimed toward achieving the goals of the school, and (2) building together a cohesive social system within a school that "pulls together" to achieve the school's goals. The functions associated within this emphasis are :

1. Stimulate and motivate staff to maximum performance.
2. Develop with the staff a realistic and objective system of accountability for learning.
3. Develop cooperatively operable assessment procedures for ongoing programs to identify and suggest alternatives for improving weak areas.
4. Work with staff in developing and implementing procedures for the evaluation of the staff.
5. Work with staff in formulating plans for evaluating and reporting student progress.
6. Provide channels for involvement of the community in the operation of the school.
7. Encourage continuous study of curricular and instructional innovations, and provide help and resources for the establishment to those that are most promising.
8. Provide leadership to students in helping them to develop a meaningful but responsible student government.
9. Establish a professional learning resources center and expedite its use.
10. Develop cooperatively with the staff a dynamic professional development and inservice education program (p.18).

Wiles and Bondi (1986) see the tasks associated with successful practice as being numerous and varying from organization to organization and so they describe generic tasks of the supervisor:

(1) Developing an operating theory
(2) Developing organization and a work environment
(3) Setting standards
(4) Using authority to establish an organizational climate
(5) Establishing effective interpersonal relations
(6) Planning and initiating action
(7) Keeping communication channels open and functioning (pp. 42,43)

To clarify what supervisors really do in practice, they discuss supervision in terms of the three levels of district, school, and classroom and then categorize the tasks as being assisting, linking or developing.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1983) address the tasks of a supervisor by differentiating supervisory roles from administrative roles. They identify three distinguishing characteristics: (1) Heavy reliance on expertness as an educational program leader and instructional leader, (2) the necessity of living in two worlds and of speaking two languages and (3) limits imposed on their authority. As educational and instructional

leaders they include many of the tasks alluded to by Harris (1985). They provide a unique perspective on the duality of the role, however, when they describe the different worlds and language of teachers and supervisors and suggest that the supervisor must live in both without alienating either. Along these same lines they describe limitations of a supervisor's authority because they are often viewed as staff rather than line officers and so "they must rely on their functional authority conferred by their knowledge as educational and instructional leaders and on personal leadership characteristics" (p.14).

Sergiovanni (1987) approaches the tasks of supervision and evaluation by describing three major categories of purposes: (1) quality control--monitoring teaching and learning in one's school, (2) professional development--helping teacher to grow and develop their knowledge, skills, and understandings of teaching and classroom life, and (3) teacher motivation--building and nurturing motivation and commitment to teaching, to the school's overall purposes, and to the school's defining educational platform.

Joyce and Showers (1988) recognize the "site leader" as being a critical element in a school and because of their heavy emphasis on the aspect of staff development have a different outlook on the tasks of an instructional leader:

> 1. Organizing the faculty into study groups and coaching teams; meeting with those teams and facilitating their activities.
> 2. Organizing a staff-development/school improvement council to coordinate activites, select priorities, and ensure facilitation of clinical and systemic components.
> 3. Arranging for time for the collaborative study of teaching and the implementation of curricular and instructional innovations.
> 4. Becoming knowledgeable about training and the options for school improvement. Ensuring that the staff is kno vledgeable.
> 5. Participating in training and the implemer tation of collective and systemic initiatives. Knowledgeability is the key here, for an in-depth understanding of innovations in curriculum and instruction is necessary to plan facilitation.
> 6. Continually assessing the educational climate of the school, feeding information and perspective to the faculty for use in decision making about possible areas for study and improvement (p. 19, 20).

It is apparent that there are numerous tasks associated with the supervisory role. In much of the literature, however, the tasks are presented in the recommended form of what *should* be undertaken in light of the writers' preferred understanding of the notion of instructional supervision. Unfortunately, the literature appears to be lacking in the areas of what principals as instructional supervisors *actually* do and how or why they choose their course of action.

Supervisory Prerequisites

Supervisors must possess and use certain skills in order to perform the multitude of tasks that exist within their supervisory roles. Oliva (1984) says that "supervisors should possess certain personality traits and certain types of knowledge and skills" (p. 20). He contends that the literature on supervision is remarkably silent on what personal characteristics are necessary for successful supervisory behaviour and suggest that traits such as warmth, friendliness, patience, and a sense of humour are essential. He recommends that the supervisor be imbued with the desire to give of oneself in order to be of assistance to others. The supervisor should be an idea person--one who stimulates thought about new and improved ways of doing things . At the same time, the supervisor must convey the attitude of valuing and seeking the ideas of others. Above all, Oliva (1984) feels that the supervisor needs to possess a predisposition to change and must constantly promote improvement. He describes an abundance of skills and knowledge essential to successful supervisors and cites leadership, human relations, and communications skills as being especially important. The foundations of supervision described are: instructional technology, curriculum theory, group interaction, counselling, sociology, disciplines, evaluation, management, learning theory, history of education, communication theory, personality theory, and philosophy of education.

Pfeiffer and Dunlap (1982) suggest the importance of self-concept and see it as a starting point for developing good interpersonal relations with others. They also see that communication skills (oral, written, verbal, nonverbal, sending, and listening) should be possessed by the effective supervisor. They state that group dynamics must be understood and knowledge about teaching and learning are essential. To analyze teaching also requires observational skills and familiarity with various instruments for collecting classroom data. In addition to these prerequisites, they also see the effective supervisor possessing the abilities of managing time, handling conflict, and coping with stress.

Wiles and Bondi (1986) describe the role of the supervisor by focussing on the skills that are employed within that role. They identify eight key skill areas of supervision: (1) knowledge about human development (2) curriculum design and development (3) instructional knowledge and skills (4) human relations skills (5) staff development knowledge and skills (6) administrative skills- planning and organizing (7) skills for managing change and (8) evaluation skills.

Glickman (1985) categorizes prerequisites of the supervisor into three broad categories. The first is a knowledge base. He contends that "supervisors need to understand the exception--what teachers and schools can be--in contrast to the norm--what teachers and schools typically are. They need to understand how knowledge and alternate supervisory practices can help break the norm of mediocrity found in typical schools" (P. 7). His second major category is an interpersonal skills base. He states that "supervisors must know how their own interpersonal behaviors affect individuals as well as groups of teachers and that study of ranges of interpersonal behaviours might be used to promote more positive and change-oriented relationships. Lastly, he recommends that the supervisor must have technical skills in observing, planning , assessing, and evaluating instructional improvement.

Evolving from their behavioral view of supervision, Alfonso , Firth, and Neville (1981) present a very comprehensive account of supervisory skills required and introduce the concept of a skill mix--a combination of the technical, human, and managerial skills. They suggest that the varied responsibilities of the instructional supervisor require the use of a differentiated skill mix with greater emphasis on the technical skill requirements. They point out that the closer one gets to the production system (teaching), the more heavily are technical skills utilized. They further suggest "that it is conceivable that the historical absence of technical skill possession and use by supervisors has contributed to the confusion so common to their role and disenchantment with it on the part of teachers" (pp. 330-331). Within the technical skill dimension, they include the skills of establishing criteria for the selection of instructional resources, analyzing classroom observational data, construction of instructional objectives, categorizing and clustering instructional objectives, applying research findings, analyzing the instructional setting, developing instructional delivery systems, developing evaluation procedures, analyzing instructional tasks, and demonstrating instructional skills and practices.

The human skills required in their second dimension are responding to individual differences, diagnosing individual strengths/potential, clarifying values, verifying perceptions, generating goal commitments, conducting group discussion, listening/paraphrasing, conferencing, conducting cooperative interaction, conducting assertive interaction, resolving conflict, stimulating cooperation, and modelling.

The third dimension of skills are the managerial skills which include identifying community characteristics, assessing teacher needs, establishing instructional priorities, analysing educational environments utilizing planning systems, designing contingency alternatives, monitoring and/or controlling activities, delegating responsibilities, budgeting

time, allocating resources, reducing job stress and documenting organizational and instructional activities.

Rogas (1988), when describing an informal approach to instructional leadership, proposes three prerequisite commitments and the embodiment of a helping attitude:

> 1. Establishing instructional leadership as a priority function for the administrative team.
> 2. Identifying a set of daily activities that can be helpful in addressing the priority.
> 3. Adopting a mind set of patience and persistence which suggests that on each day something will be done to strengthen the quality of instruction within the building.
>
> Each of these commitments must embody a helping attitude, as well as a series of planned activities. The helping attitude in each instance is of prime importance (p.17).

Perhaps it was to be expected from the previous section that when there are numerous tasks to be undertaken, there will be numerous requirements to respond to these tasks in a competent manner. However, similar to the literature on the tasks of the supervisor, very few studies identifying the prerequisite skills of *practising* principals as instructional supervisors are to be found. The writers propose "shoulds and musts" but as Oliva (1984) suggests, the literature is remarkably silent in this area.

Relationships

Wiles and Bondi (1986) indicate the importance of relationships in the supervisory process when they state,

> Of all the skills of supervision, none is cited as often in the literature as human relations. In fact, most supervision activity is just that! Supervisors are communicators and connectors in the human network of the school. Most supervisory activity is face-to-face. Supervision is not a role for someone who is shy or unwilling to relate to others in a positive and outgoing manner. Supervisors, as people, should be humane, 'self-actualized', individuals who establish a cooperative climate by their very presence (p. 175).

Within this context, they see three important tasks of the supervisor : creating a humane atmosphere, setting a positive work climate, and establishing an appropriate image for supervision.

Glickman and Pajak (1986) examine the relationship between supervisors and teachers by examining two different roles of the supervisor: evaluating verses helping. Their studies indicate that the formal role or title of a supervisor is not as important as the behavior of the person within the role. To illustrate, they give the example of the supervisor with formal evaluation authority who demonstrates care and trust and to whom teachers frequently go for help. On the other hand, they have observed the supervisors who ostensibly had helping responsibilities only but who were aloof, dogmatic, and insensitive--and who were not trusted by teachers. They do leave open to question, though, whether or not in reality a supervisor can be both helper and evaluator.

Goldhammer, Anderson, and Krajewski (1980) recognize the importance of the teacher-supervisor relationship when they discuss rapport and the nurturance of the self-concept of the teacher and the supervisor as being necessary to the successful implementation of clinical supervision. They see rapport, a harmonious relationship between supervisor and teacher, as an overriding and continual aspect of the clinical supervisory process. They further suggest that some guiding principles that would enhance the teacher-supervisor relationship: They state that every effort must be made to reduce the teacher's natural tendency to be apprehensive about supervision. Supervisors should seek to enhance the teacher's sense of professional autonomy. Supervisors should encourage initiative in teachers and respond to creative efforts. Supervisor's should have a good self concept and be aware of promoting a healthy self-concept in the teachers (pp. 46-53).

Blumberg (1980) is most emphatic about the importance of supervisor-teacher relationships when he says,

> Its major concern is with what appears to be the most problematic part of the whole supervisory enterprise in the schools--the nature of the human relationships that exist between supervisors and teachers. . . . that is if you ask a supervisor what makes his job difficult, the chances are that he will talk about his relationships with teachers and not his ignorance of new curriculum materials. . . . What seems to be at issue for most supervisors, in one fashion or another, are the problems that surround the establishment of productive working relationships with teachers (pp. 1-2).

He becomes quite stinging in his criticism when he arrives at two general statements about supervision. The first is that "much that occurs in the name of supervision is a waste of time *as teachers see it.* The second is that the character of relationships between teachers as a group and supervisors as a group can be described as somewhat of a cold war."

Blumberg (1980) cites the studies of Heishberger and Young (1975) to illustrate attitudes and perceptions of teachers in regard to the supervisory relationship. Their studies indicate that the principal is often perceived as being potentially dangerous. Other studies as well indicate that the supervisory relationship is not perceived as being a helpful one (Blumberg & Amidon, 1965; cited in Blumberg, 1980; Sackney & Johnson 1978; McPherson, 1979; cited in Sackney, 1980). More recent studies (Babiuk, 1987; Wacowich, 1983), however, tend to view the relationship as being more positive and helpful.

Blumberg (1980) also comments on the relationship between supervisors and teachers and the organizational environments in which they interact. He discusses organizational elements such as the autonomy of the school, autonomy of the teacher, tenure and the presumption of competence, the productivity of teaching, aspiration levels of teachers, and the issues of professionalism and bureaucracy. He concludes by making the point that educational organizations are loosely coupled (Weick, 1976). "This is a

situation where the teacher can do his job for the most part without the supervisor. The opposite does not hold: the supervisor cannot do his job without the teacher" (p. 60). The implications of this statement are that in order for a helping relationship to be effective, the teacher must want to be helped.

In a more recent study Blumberg and Jonas (1987) emphasize the aspect of teacher control when they discuss the notion of "permitting access." In this study they suggest that teachers can provide the supervisor legitimate access to their classrooms but not necessarily interpersonal access, and therefore the supervisory process is rendered meaningless. They equate the situation to politely responding to the door-to-door salesperson but not letting him/her into your house or refusing to "buy." The study indicates that access is gained on the basis of the supervisor's task-oriented approach toward the teacher, the supervisor's interpersonal set toward the teacher and the supervisors's own competence as an educator. A concluding comment that goes beyond productive supervision is also worthy of note:

> That is, to be considered competent, to be listened to, to be asked to collaborate with one's organizational supervisor, particularly when that person is highly competent, produces a feeling of being valued. There is a vital mental health component attached to our notion of access, which probably should not be ignored (p. 62).

It is clear from the literature that the teacher/ principal relationship is of prime importance in the process of instructional supervision. Principals and teachers need to develop trusting and open relationships to allow the process to be a productive one. This relationship is viewed as being problematic, however, and the question remains as to how the fruitful relationships can be established and maintained.

Supervisory Options

The variety and complexity of the tasks, skills, and relationships discussed in the previous sections suggest that in order to address all of these elements, a large repertoire of practices may be necessary. The literature presents a variety of supervisory options that an instructional supervisor may wish to undertake, ranging from formal to informal, directive to non-directive, and individual or group practises.

Clinical Supervision

The literature supports the concept of clinical supervision as being one practice that a supervisor can employ when supervising the individual teacher. Building on the early conceptualization of Morris Cogan, Goldhammer, Anderson, and Krajewski (1980) present their definition of clinical supervision: "Clinical supervision is that phase of instructional supervision which draws its data from first-hand observation of actual teaching events, and involves face-to-face (and other associated) interaction between the supervisor and teacher in the analysis of teaching behaviors and activities for instructional improvement " (p. 20).

Goldhammer et al. (1980) present nine characteristics associated with clinical supervision; it:

1. is a technology for improving instruction.
2. is a deliberate intervention into the instructional process.
3. is goal-oriented, combining school and personal growth needs.
4. assumes a working relationship between teacher(s) and supervisor.
5. requires mutual trust, as reflected in understanding, support, and commitment for growth.
6. is systematic, yet requires a flexible and continuously changing methodology.
7. creates productive tension for bridging the real-ideal gap.
8. assumes the supervisor knows more about instruction and learning than the teacher(s).
9. requires training for the supervisor (pp. 26-27).

The model that they suggest consists of five stages:

> Stage 1. The Preobservation conference - the teacher and supervisor confer about the lesson to be observed, find out what kind of help the teacher would like to have from the supervisor, and then plan the observation accordingly
> Stage 2. Observation- the supervisor observes the lesson and records the necessary information
> Stage 3. Analysis and Strategy - the supervisor analyses the information gathered from the observation and plans for the supervisory conference.
> Stage 4. The Supervisory Conference - the supervisor provides reinforcement and feedback to the teacher for improving future teaching.
> Stage 5. The Postconference analysis - the supervisor and teacher assess the process in terms of its value for the teacher and the skills and methods employed by the supervisor (chapters 5-10).

Sergiovanni (1987) adds to the understanding of clinical supervision by presenting it as a formative process building on teacher motivation and commitment on one hand, and on providing for staff development on the other. Further, he suggests that clinical supervision need not be hierarchical; that is it lends itself towards peer and collegial relationships among teachers. Others (Glickman, 1985; Oliva, 1984; Pfeiffer & Dunlap, 1982) also see peer involvement as being a feasible alternative to the supervisor within the clinical supervision process. However, they do not advocate total endorsement of peer clinical supervision and point out the weaknesses of this approach: greater demands on teachers' time, the expense and time required for proper training and the possibility that clinical supervision might be incompatible with teachers' work and learning styles. The time, training , and compatibility constraints are also applicable to supervisors and need to be considered before undertaking this model of supervision.

Supportive Supervision

To address some of these constraints, Reilkoff (1981) offers a modification of clinical supervision which she terms supportive supervision and defines it as,

> That system in which supervisor and teacher collaborate to assess and maximize student performance. Unlike clinical supervision, which focuses on teaching

> behavior, supportive supervision focuses on the student. Student attitudes, behaviors, and learning outcomes are analyzed for the purpose of their improvement. At no time during this action-oriented process is the teacher evaluated or negatively criticized (p. 31).

Ego-counselling

Pfieffer and Dunlap (1982) suggest that ego-counselling may be a useful alternative for the supervisor and teacher. Whereas clinical supervision deals with teacher lessons, this technique focuses on self-appraisal, relationship of actions to objectives, consideration of obstacles, and the development of new ways of thinking and acting as a teacher. It is concerned more with problems in reality such as the discrepancy between professional expectations and achievement (p. 103). A limitation of this approach is that supervisors might not feel qualified or comfortable in using it, but the authors suggest that referral to professional counsellors is also appropriate.

Self-Appraisal

Ego-counselling is also closely associated with the technique of self-appraisal which is used by individual teachers to assess their own performance. Doll (1983) suggests that microteaching and interaction analysis are useful tools to use within this approach. Microteaching is where a teacher teaches a small group of students for a short period of time and the teaching session is video taped. The teacher views the videotape and analyses his/her performance. They note in what areas they would like to improve and repeat the process. The advantages of this approach are that the feedback is prompt and manageable and that teachers are in control of their own learning. While acknowledging the advantages of this technique, disadvantages also are apparent. It requires additional teacher time, reflection involving others might be more useful, and the emphasis on the teacher by the teacher in the process might lead to neglect of the students involved in the process.

The other strategies that Doll (1983) suggests for self-appraisal are the use of Flander's analysis technique to observe the interactions between teacher and pupil, use of simulation, establishment of teacher centers, and analysis of self- made learning materials.

Individualized Professional Development

Another option for supervision, as presented by Sergiovanni (1987) and related to the non-directive approach of Glickman (1985), is that of individualized professional development. Here, a teacher working alone, assumes responsibility for his or her own professional development. The teacher develops a yearly plan--targets or goals derived from the teacher's own assessment of personal needs are selected. This plan is then shared with the principal, ensuring that the plan is realistic and attainable. At the end of a specified period, usually a year, the principal and teacher meet again to discuss the teacher's progress in meeting the professional development targets. Generally, teachers are expected to provide some evidence illustrating progress. Individualized professional development is seen as being ideally suited for competent and self-directed teachers because of the independence allowed. It also encourages more efficient use of time and is less costly and demanding than other methods. One problem that Sergiovanni sees is in the area of target-setting. A principal may autocratically impose targets or adhere rigidly to prespecified targets resulting in lost flexibility and adaptation.

Informal Supervision

Sergiovanni (1987) also describes the practice of informal supervision. This is characterized by frequent but brief and informal observations of teachers. Typically, no appointments are made and visits are not announced. The principal is viewed as being an instructional partner in every classroom and for every teaching and learning situation. Though informal supervision is typically casual, it should include more deliberate attempts to observe teaching and to provide systematic feedback. This might involve brief informal

discussions or notes and letters or it may involve a more formal mode of contact such as a conference. Quality control, the symbolic meaning it communicates to teachers, and the enrichment it contributes to the school's culture are seen as being important benefits of this approach. This option of supervision is seen as being particularly suitable for teachers who may be having difficulty with the teaching and learning that is going on in their classrooms.

McEvoy (1987) as well, refers to informal supervision but in a different sense. She sees the everyday acts of principals as being very influential in promoting staff development. In particular, she focusses on the brief, fragmented, informal interactions of principals with their staff. Through examination of the content of these interactions she identified six ways that principals appeared to exercise instructional leadership through staff development. They did so by (1) informing teachers of professional opportunities, (2) disseminating professional and curriculum materials, (3) focusing staff attention on a specific theme, (4) soliciting teachers' opinions, (5) encouraging experimentation, and (6) recognizing individual teachers' achievements (p. 76). Rather than seeing the informal routines of principals as hampering their effectiveness as instructional leaders, she views the routines as being useful tools for staff development:

> Principals often complain that their effectiveness and ability to launch innovative curricular or major staff development programs are hampered by their daily routine. The research of the Far West study suggests, however, that principals can actually stimulate and reinforce professional growth within their schools--for individual teachers and their staffs as a whole.

Deal and Celotte (1980) discuss the informal approach to supervision and favor it to the more formal approaches: "Instructional activities do not seem to be effectively coordinated through formal channels" (p. 472). They recommend that principals capitalize on their informal clout to set the spirit and tone of their school. They note such strategies as informal meetings with teachers to offer advice and support as a senior colleague, personal efforts to provide opportunities for diverse philosophies and concerns to be

negotiated into shared values, and symbolic leadership to promote "collective rejoicing" and fellowship.

Staff Development and In-Service

In addition to working with teachers individually, supervisors also employ various supervisory options which address groups of teachers. Different approaches to staff development and in-servicing have been used, but two of the most influential people in this area have been Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (1980). They view in-service training as being a very effective way to improve the skills of teachers. The major components of training are (1) presentation of theory or description of skill or strategy; (2) modeling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching; (3) practice in simulated and classroom settings; (4) structured and open-ended feedback providing information about performance; and (5) coaching (Brandt, 1987; Neubert & Brattón,1987; Sparks & Bruder, 1987) for application--hands-on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom. In their most recent and most comprehensive work, Joyce and Showers (1988) focus on student achievement but describe a pervasive system of involvement in staff development that includes teachers, administrators and policy-makers.

Peer Supervision

A supervisory option such as peer supervision removes the supervisor from the traditional heirarchy of the supervisory structure. This is where small teams of teachers use the essential components of clinical supervision to help each other grow professionally (Glatthorn, 1987). Many benefits such as improved communication, shared decision-making, and decreased anxiety, have been described (Lesnik, 1987). Also, others (Gersten, Carnine, & Green,1982; Rallis & Highsmith, 1986) see this type of supervision as being a way of allowing principals to carry out their management functions for which it is felt they are better suited.

Collaboration

The notion of collaboration by teachers is seen as being an important one. Glatthorn (1987) suggests that teachers can collaborate to address curriculum development. McLaughlin's (1976) studies of mutual adaptation offer much support for this type of curricular collaboration in successfully implementing change. Wildman and Niles (1987) see collaboration of teachers as helping to overcome emotional and cognitive demands and view it as being essential for professional growth.

Cooperative Professional Development

Closely related to the idea of collaboration is Sergiovanni's (1987) suggested option of cooperative professional development. Simply stated, this is a collegial process within which teachers agree to work together for their own professional growth and development (p.197). This is seen as being different from peer or collegial supervision in that these labels tend to suggest that teachers are supervising one another in a management sense. In contrast, cooperative professional development is viewed as non-evaluative and strictly as a device for teachers to help one another as professional colleagues. Citing Glatthorn (1984, p.39), he suggests that activities such as observing each others classes, giving each other feedback about the observation, and discussing shared professional concerns would be present. He presents the informal benefits of this option as being a means for teachers to become more knowledgeable of the work of others, providing a mechanism for communication and allowing teachers to feel more comfortable with this supportive option since evidence exists that teachers learn a great deal from one another and trust one another as sources of new ideas and as sharers of problems that they face .

Glatthorn (1987) sees the term cooperative professional development as being all inclusive of peer-centered options. He discusses the idea of professional dialogue where small groups of teachers meet regularly for the guided discussion of their own teaching as it

relates to current developments in education. The objective is to facilitate reflection about practice, helping teachers to become more thoughtful decision makers putting the notion of cognition at the center (p. 31). Similarly, Costa and Garmston (1985) advocate moving away from the behavioral orientation of teaching and instead contend that supervisors should appeal to and focus on the enhancement of teachers' cognitive processes. In their scheme, the supervisor is seen as a crucial mediator of teachers' intelligent behavior by calling attention to discrepancies between intended and actual learning outcomes. They pose problems intended to invite more than a memory-type response.

It is clear that there are many practices from which an instructional supervisor may choose. The practices range from extensive to casual involvement, formal to informal process, and individual to group involvement. There does not appear to be a favoured approach, but rather the range of practices described are representative of the variety of perspectives held in relation to the notion of instructional supervision. Similar to other sections of the literature review, the supervisory options tend to be presented in prescriptive form, and studies exploring the actual practice of principals are few in number.

Summary

The related literature suggests that instructional supervision is a complex and multi-faceted concept that incorporates numerous perspectives, tasks, skills, relationships, and options for practice. The complexity and all-encompassing nature of the term were reinforced in the first section when one considers the numerous interpretations that were presented for instructional supervision. Terms such as inspection, scientific, bureaucratic, cooperative, clinical, democratic, directive, behavioural, reflective and leadership were all associated with the meaning of the term. Although there was no agreement on a precise

definition, contemporary writers indicated a movement away from the notions of inspection and control in favor of notions of facilitation and collaboration. Because of its nature and importance, it is a concept that will not be neglected but will continue to undergo examination and evolution in attempts to arrive at a clearer understanding.

The second section examined the supervisor (principal) in the supervisory process and presented the various tasks, prerequisites and relationships associated with this role. In summarized form, the role of the instructional supervisor included such tasks as development, facilitation, and assessment of curriculum and staff, planning and organizing resources, and developing goals and school climate. Prerequisites required to meet the numerous tasks were personal qualities such as warmth, patience, strong self-concept and a sense of humour. In addition to the personal attributes, the literature suggested that it was important for the supervisor to be knowedgeable in the areas of curriculum, teaching and learning, as well as being in possession of sound technical and managerial skills. As instructional supervision is an activity involving people, the importance of the relationships within the process was highlighted.

In the final section, various practices that an instructional supervisor might employ were presented. The options available to an instructional supervisor ranged from practices involving individuals (ie. ego-counselling, self-appraisal) to those involving groups of individuals (ie. staff development, in-servicing). Formal intensive practices such as clinical supervision as well as less formal, non-directive practices such as individual professional development were described. The manifold options that exist for an instructional supervisor tend to be supportive of Sergiovanni's (1987) contention that supervision should be a reflective activity in which the supervisors choose the practices that they feel are most appropriate for their particular situation.

To conclude, while there is a great body of literature available on the topic of instructional supervision, there remains an uncertainty about the topic and lack of agreement in many respects. Only a small amount of research has involved the actual practitioner of instructional supervision-- the principal--and consequently the writing on this topic tends to be prescriptive. Further exploration in this area would be useful in resolving some of the uncertainty.

Conceptual Framework

Although the nature of this study does not require the application of a conceptual model to organize and interpret the data, the use of a conceptual framework provides a valuable foundation for considering the meanings and actions of principals as instructional supervisors. Dwyer's (1984) model of the principal's role in instructional management (see Figure 1) is a useful starting point. He sees the influences such as the community, the institutional context and the principal's beliefs and experiences as affecting the principal's instructional behavior and suggests that two major avenues of attack result to "close the gap between goals and realities"--school climate and instructional organization. These actions in turn affect student outcomes.

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Figure 1. The Principal's Role in Instructional Management

(Dwyer, 1984, p. 34)

The literature (Doll,1983; Glickman,1985; McEvoy, 1987; Sergiovanni &Starratt, 1983; Sergiovanni,1987) presents the process of instructional supervision as an extremely dynamic and interactive process. This aspect does not seem to be fully captured by the linearity that Dwyer's model suggests. For this reason, I propose a broader and more integrated model to represent the meanings and actions of principals as instructional supervisors (see Figure 2).

Within a variety of contexts--organizational, school, community, individual--participants in the process create meanings for themselves. District mandates, the students, staff and resources of the school, the socio-cultural aspect of the community and the experience, knowledge, values, and skills that the individual participants possess may all affect the meaning created by the principal. From these meanings, actions emerge that reflect these meanings. The resulting action may be represented by various interactions and practices of the participants. For example, they could take the form of one-to-one or group interaction and could involve one supervisory approach or a combination of many. The actions, in turn, lead to various outcomes such as student/teacher/principal growth, improved practice, enhanced relationships or conversely, negative growth, practice, or relationships. The process is not solely uni-directional and the outcome does not necessarily represent an endpoint, however. The outcomes or actions could in fact create new or altered meanings for the participants, resulting in new or alternate actions and outcomes, thus illustrating the dynamic, multi-directional nature of the process.

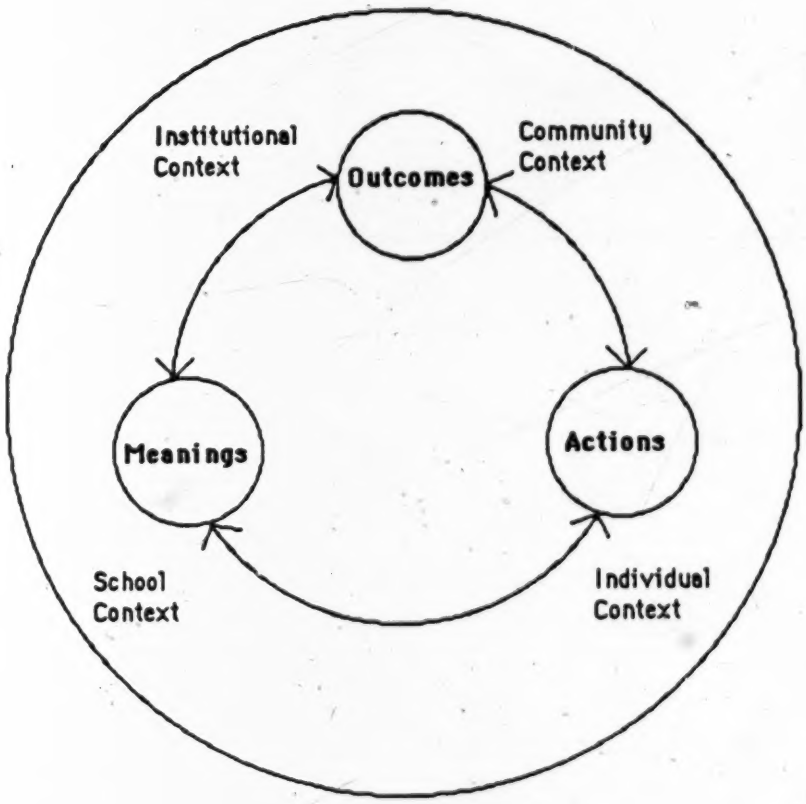

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

The research design of this study explored the meanings and actions of principals as instructional supervisors. The design was chosen to seek greater understanding of the concept rather than attempt to develop generalizations from the data.

In this chapter, the specifics of the methodology used in this study are presented. Initially, the design of the study is outlined, followed by a description of how the instrument was developed and how the data were collected. The areas of respondent selection, researcher/respondent interaction and ethical considerations are then addressed. The chapter concludes with a discussion in regard to the trustworthiness of the data and a description of how the data were analyzed.

Research Design

The proposed study can best be described as an interpretive study within the naturalistic paradigm. Because it is a naturalistic study, it is exploratory and emergent. That is, rather than having a preordinate design with an explicit hypotheses, the design emerged as the study proceeded (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). The study was guided by the questions related to the problem statement and insights emerged and meanings developed as data were gathered. The study involved a number of individual respondents in different settings at different times.

Instrument Development

The guiding questions for the interview were developed from a questionnaire on the topic of instructional supervision that was pilot tested with graduate students in a research methods course. Following the completion of the questionnaire, the graduate students were interviewed in regard to its design. The feedback provided was very helpful in drawing my attention to the importance of word selection in the open-ended questions. Their responses and the discussion that followed also pointed out the strenghts and weaknesses of the questions themselves, and assisted me towards improving the quality of the questions used in this study.

Following this, a pilot interview was held with an elementary school principal to give me an opportunity to practise and improve my interview skills. The interview aided me in gaining insight about the type of information that might be obtained from my guide questions and provided an initial connection to the related literature in the area. In addition, the interview helped me to overcome anxieties related to the interview process and to realize the benefit of making notes throughout the interview. The notes served to remind me of areas that needed clarification and helped me to focus on what had been said and what areas had not been covered yet.

Data Collection

Data were collected primarily through the use of semi-structured interviews with the respondents. The guiding questions formed a framework for the interview, but I allowed for free-flow discussion between myself and the respondent. I felt that this type of face-to-face interaction would allow greater depth of response, result in richer data, and thus

would be more appropriate to the nature of the study. As Guba and Lincoln (1982) point out,

> The naturalist prefers humans-as-instruments for reasons such as their greater insightfulness, their flexibility, their responsiveness, the holistic emphasis they can provide, their ability to utilize tacit knowledge, and their ability to process and ascribe meaning to data simultaneously with their acquisiton (p.245).

As six of the interviews were held in the respondents' schools, I made a point of arriving early and walking around the school, looking into classrooms, reading bulletin boards, visiting the staffroom and where possible, talking to students and teachers. This sort of observation provided me with an initial "feel" for the school and I recorded these impressions in my journal. During the course of the interview while listening to what the respondent was saying, I tried to be aware of non-verbal cues that might be present and extend the meaning of the spoken word. In addition, I asked respondents for referential adequacy materials that they thought might be relevant to my study (ie. school handbooks, role expectations, administrative communications to staff).

Data Sources: Selection and Contact

The respondents for the study were eight practising principals selected from a large urban system. Because the interview was the primary means of data collection in this study, I felt that it was very important that the respondents trust and feel comfortable with me, the interviewer. Therefore, I chose prospective respondents that I had worked with previously or knew personally. It was felt that this would enhance the quality and trustworthiness of the data. Also, an attempt was made to provide a broad range of representation by choosing respondents who varied in terms of years of experience and the level of school that they administered (elementary or secondary).

In early December, after receiving approval from the Ethics Review Committee, initial contact was made by telephone with the prospective respondents. The purpose of the study and the nature of their involvement was explained to them in an attempt to solicit their participation. Those expressing provisional agreement to participate in the study were sent a letter and consent form (see Appendix A) which more specifically described the purpose of the study and the requirements of their involvement. The principals were informed that the interviews would be tape recorded and that their responses would be transcribed. It was stated that the transcriptions would be forwarded to them for their perusal and that they would have the opportunity to clarify and revise their transcripts. They were also given the opportunity of having the interview take place at a time and location that was convenient for them. As well, the letter contained assurances that the information provided by them would be treated with confidentiality and that names would only be used in the generic form. ie. the principal, the school.

Upon receipt of their consent forms, interviews were scheduled and conducted over a two-month period. The interviews were transcribed and returned to respondents along with a package of selected readings on instructional supervision in response to their expressed desire to know more about this topic. In an accompanying letter (see Appendix A) the participants were requested to peruse the transcripts to ensure that their responses were truly representative of their thoughts and they were given the opportunity to make any revisions that they felt were necessary. To gain further clarification, questions were posed in the margins of the transcripts and additional questions were included at the end of the letter.

Three weeks after the forwarding of the transcription package, principals were contacted by telephone to allow the opportunity for revision and mutual clarification to occur. Later, as categories and themes started to emerge from the data analysis, a summary

of these initial findings was sent to each of the respondents along with an invitation for their input. A copy of the detailed analysis was forwarded to them upon completion, again, soliciting their input to ensure the trustworthiness of the data.

Data Trustworthiness

The interaction and contacts with the respondents mentioned in the previous section address one of Guba and Lincoln's (1982) suggested means of establishing trustworthiness in a naturalistic inquiry, that of member checks.

> Thus, the crucial question for the naturalist becomes, " Do the data sources (most often humans) find the inquirer's analysis, formulation, and interpretations to be credible(believable)?" (p. 246)

The numerous contacts with the respondents provided them with the opportunity to revise their own information and provide feedback to enhance the analysis and interpretations of the researcher.

In addition to member checks, triangulation was employed to cross-check data and their interpretation. As data from the interviews emerged, they were compared to previous sources of data. Also, a form of internal triangulation was used within the interviews by encouraging the respondents to provide specific examples which might exemplify more general thoughts. Where possible, referential adequacy materials (school handbooks, supervisory policies, role definitions) were collected as additional sources for cross-referencing. I also engaged in peer debriefing with my supervisor throughout the study to test my insights and to receive advice about methodological steps. In addition, a personal journal was maintained to allow for my assumptions, insights, observation, and methodology to be recorded.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was undertaken with the view that it is a reconstructive process. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated,

> The process of data analysis, then, is essentially a synthetic one, in which the constructions that have emerged (been shaped by) inquirer-source interactions are reconstructed into meaningful wholes. Data analysis is thus not a matter of data *reduction*, as is frequently claimed, but one of *induction* (p. 333).

I began the process of analysis with the first telephone contact with the respondents. These initial contacts allowed me to gain a sense of their receptivity and interest in the project. After each interview was completed, I used my personal journal to express my emergent thoughts and observations.

The interviews were transcribed and submitted to repeated readings to allow me to gain a holistic sense for the data. Initial ideas that emerged from these general readings were noted in my journal. I then read and focussed on each individual transcript to formulate categories for the data. It was an interactive process in which the first transcript served as a foundation for the development of initial categories. As succeeding transcripts were drawn into the pool of data, new categories crystallized and preceding categories were modified or retained. The result of this iterative process was a more "open" set of categories intended to incorporate data across all of the transcripts. At this point, I sought a framework that would provide an organizational sense to the developed categories and upon further review, discovered that the categories for the most part fell naturally within a framework provided by the guiding questions. I then grouped the associated categories according to the guide questions and tried to reconstruct an understanding of the data that lay within this framework. The completion of this process allowed me to identify underlying themes that were embedded in the data.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the methodology that was used to conduct this study. The study was described as being an interpretive study within the naturalistic paradigm. The instrument was developed from the knowledge gained from research courses and a pilot interview. Eight practicing principals selected from a large urban system formed the respondent group, and data were collected primarily through the use of in-depth interviews. Member checks, peer debriefing, triangulation, and a personal journal were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. The chapter concluded with a description of how the data were analyzed and the resulting analysis is presented in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the data gathered from the eight principals who took part in the study. The guide questions provide the organizational framework for the categorized information that emerged from the interview data.

The intent of this chapter is to share my reconstruction and understanding of the data gathered from the principals in this study; to share what instructional supervision means for them, what they do as instructional supervisors, the influences that shape their meanings, conditions that enhance or constrain their efforts in the process and their feelings of success or non-success.

What does Instructional Supervision Mean To You?

This question served as a starting point in the study but was perhaps the most difficult one for the interviewees to answer. The difficulty in providing a definition of the concept did not seem to be due to a lack of familiarity with the term, but rather, it seemed to be a difficulty with finding the appropriate words that would form an encapsulating definition. Initially, many of the principals prefaced their meaning of the concept by referring to the complexity and all-encompassing nature of the term:

> Let's see, instructional supervision for myself . . . What's going through my mind right now is yes, I think I have a meaning for it, but I'm not sure that I've ever taken the time to put it into words. And I have a sense of it maybe being too complex to fit into a sentence or a paragraph.

> There must be a million things that are meant by that term and that's probably part of the problem.
>
> Well, I guess it means alot of things and it's difficult to decide what's first.
>
> I know when I sit in meetings and people talk about instructional supervision, and I get this queasy sort of feeling inside me. What the heck are they talking about? What part is it they want ? This chunk or this chunk, or this chunk? And it's a package. It is not something that exists by itself. Because if you look at the nature of instruction, it's all of those things. So you have to attend to all of them. You have to attend to them in the priority of what has to come first. And each part is very important. You can't do without them but they interlock, they link. They're not so neat a structure as this is a list of teaching, this is a list of curriculum, this is a list of whatever.

After the initial deliberation, a range of various meanings was expressed. Rather than trying to express a consummate definition, most principals began by describing the component of instructional supervision that came most readily to mind and built upon that. Principals talked about curriculum, teacher-principal relations, student learning, effective instruction, professional development, contexts, school philosophy and vision. The variety of responses given truly reinforced the complexity and magnitude of the concept expressed in their preface.

For example, one principal started by describing the relationship between the staff and the principal and later broadened his definition to include yearly planning, professional development, and the larger context of the school:

> It includes not just the times when you're in the classroom observing teachers or conferencing, but it has to do with the whole relationship between and among staff and the principal. It has to do with your leadership in developing plans for the year. Now I'm not sure that I'm being very clear with that but I guess I do think that it's much more than just negotiating with a teacher about the kinds of things that they are going to be working on in their classrooms and giving them inservice opportunities and practice things, the coaching and feedback. All that is instructional supervision, but if it doesn't fit within a larger context of what's going on in a school, then it's missing something. I'm not sure I can be any more precise than that.

Another principal related the common emphasis on "what teachers are doing in the classroom," but expressed dissatisfaction with the limitations of that understanding. He

included human relationships and the environment of the school as being important parts of his definition:

> I think, as I said last week, I couldn't define instructional supervision as a distinct entity, as many notable educators have managed to do. I think that when we usually talk about instructional supervision we primarily focus on what teachers are doing in the classroom. I think that is a very narrow concept and one which I cannot accept as being a good, true, and honest definition. As well as instructional supervision being concerned with what is happening in the classroom, I believe that instructional supervision begins "at the curb" and involves human relationships. I maintain that instructional supervision is not just the paying of attention to the pedagogical side of things, ensuring that teachers are teaching the curriculum, but instructional supervision consists of my providing an environment where my teachers are able to teach, of helping my teachers do the very best they can do in all aspects of their work. For example, from outdoor supervision to helping them maintain their and their students' enthusiasm in extra-curricular activities.

He talked about principals and teachers being honest with each other, and "having no surprises." He felt that if both teachers and principals had a clear understanding of what was expected of them, then both parties would be more comfortable in the school: "I feel that one very important aspect of instructional supervision is that I create no surprises for my teachers. I think that if they feel comfortable in the school then they are going to be able to do a good job." In addition, he saw communication as being an important component as well: "There's got to be good communication in the school and this helps a teacher become more comfortable in their instructional practices during the course of the day." His meaning of the term also included rewarding achievement, having a sense of humor, "stretching the staff," and providing a conducive climate. He concluded his definition by discussing leadership as opposed to management and then pulled the components together :

> I think that is as far as I am able to go in trying to define what I perceive to be the content of instructional leadership. Without my by no means exhaustive list of principal behaviors feeding into instructional leadership, there would in fact be no leadership at all. Management certainly will be present as principals have a mandate to manage their schools. The definition of management being making people do what you wish them to do, and leadership being making people *want* to do what you would like them to do is quite appropriate for this stage of our discussion on instructional leadership. It is only by taking care of the basic needs of teachers such

> that you are supportive of them, you are not going to throw them any surprises, you will not mislead them, you will reward their achievement, etc. That a climate in the school may be created where staff, children, and ultimately leadership can succeed.

During the course of the interviews, all of the principals recognized the importance of the student in relation to the concept of instructional supervision. Three principals in particular started discussing their understanding of the concept by focussing on the student and then building their explanations from that basis. In the first instance, the respondent saw the aspect of student learning as being the central concern of instructional supervision and went on to include "anything that impacted upon student learning" as being part of his definition. Viewing instructional supervision in this way affected how he approached and acted with significant others--teachers and parents:

> I guess anything that has an impact on children's learning would be instructional supervision. And working not only with teachers but also working with parents so they understand what is happening and trying to work with the students which I haven't been successful at all in doing. Studying situations where you're bringing in expertise, exposing teachers to new ideas through staff meetings or one-on-one talks, going in and encouraging them for what has been taking place.

> I guess one of the things that hinges here is people say it's important to work with teachers but you've got to be careful. My feeling is that it's important to work with teachers but you've got to keep in mind that there are twenty-five children in that classroom who are being affected over a year and that's important. And so I put it on that scale where it's twenty-five to one. And we're here for the children. A lot of people say we're here for the adult and the parents out there and our school board - that's our client. As far as I'm personally concerned, they pay for it but I'm concerned about the children and what's happening. So that is how I deal with teachers.

In the second instance, the respondent started by talking about the area of instruction and a student-centered school. He saw instructional supervision as going far beyond academic instruction to include pro-social skill instruction or any other aspect of instruction that teachers were involved in:

> Instructional supervision for myself is supervision of all areas of instruction and often, when I speak to my colleagues about instruction, immediately, we focus on the academics. When you take a look at a student-centered school, instruction means *all* areas of involvement with students, whether the instruction be specific to the hard core subjects of Language Arts, Math, Social and Science, or the whole

> area of pro-social skill training. When children are not given instruction by teachers or parents in regards to how to get along with, how to co-operate, how to share, how to plan, involvement with themselves, with others, then you have a whole number of problems that come up. We'd identify these in schools as discipline problems. Well, discipline defined for me is the process of teaching children pro-social behavior. Defined that way, then, there is an instructional component to it. Instructional supervision, for myself as an administrator, is to have a sense of feel for the instruction from A to Z --academics all the way through to pro-social skill training, that the teachers are involved with students.

In the third instance, the principal talked about instruction of the students and the act of teaching. He focussed on how the student and teacher combine in the process. A second component in his meaning of instructional supervision was that of ensuring that the curriculum mandate was being fulfilled. The third component of his definition was that of professional development--making sure that the teachers are aware of upgrading opportunities and current knowledge and strategies. Later in our interview, he made a point of including one aspect of instructional supervision that he initially overlooked--the kids:

> Instruction with the student is generally what I would perceive as instructional supervision. Supervising the instruction would mean going into classrooms, number one, and observing the teaching act. Observing the student role and how the two combine. In addition to the teaching part of it, instructional supervision would also include a curriculum mandate to make sure the Alberta Ed mandate is being expounded in your school. I think probably a third component would be teachers attending workshops, and seminars-ongoing upgrading, I guess, of the teaching staff to make sure that the instruction that happens in the school is efficient. And those kind of things you're talking about, teacher awareness of learning styles, co-operative learning strategies, all the teaching strategies that are involved. So instructional supervision as I see it, Les, is a very broad field.
>
> You know, there's an element of instructional supervision that we haven't even talked about and that is the kids. Kids definitely supervise instruction, definitely. And you know, we talked about other teachers and we talked about principals, administration, and department heads- whatever leadership positions come into the classroom. But *kids* are instructional supervisors too, because they'll give you the nod or they'll give you the raspberry.

Two other respondents expressed their meaning of instructional supervision by referring to an obligation to the Alberta Education curriculum mandate. One of the respondents initially made the distinction that instructional supervision is not evaluation of

teachers. Rather, he saw it as ensuring that the program being delivered not only complies with the requirements of Alberta Education but also the meets the needs of the students in a particular school:

> I guess, to me, one thing that I don't think instructional supervision is, is evaluation of teachers, although I think it could be one component of supervision. In other words, how well does the teacher deliver that curriculum to whatever grade they're teaching?. . . But I guess, to me, instructional supervision is making sure that the program that is being offered in your school not only complies with Alberta Education guidelines, but is also the program that should be taught to whatever group of kids you happen to have at that particular time. Which, I suppose, means then that each school could have a different program, even though the curriculum would be generic.

Another respondent initiated his definition of instructional supervision by discussing the importance of having a clear understanding of what his philosophy was and what his expectations for the students in his school were. From this personal philosophical foundation, he attempted to draw together others in the school to develop a school vision. Taking into consideration the provincial and local goals and priorities of education, a curriculum for the students in his school could then evolve:

> I guess the first thing that it means to me is that I have to be sure that I know what my philosophy is and what my expectations are for the students that I'm responsible for and that I'm the leader for. I see that role as important and I've got to have some sense of understanding my expectations and then hopefully drawing together enough people who share in those. Then I'm open to redefining and so on. And so if I look at this particular school, one of the very first things that concerned me was that there wasn't a philosophy, there wasn't a vision, there wasn't anything that said, "This is who we are and what we expect to do." And so we had to spend a lot of time to come up with vision statements. What is our curriculum supposed to do for our kids? And in doing that, we looked at the goals of education, provincially, and we looked at the priorities of the School Board and the kind of statements that they'd made with regard to what education was supposed to do.

From our discussions, there emerged one aspect that all of the principals had addressed emphatically and that was the great importance attached to the notion of instructional supervision:

> I think that it's one of the most important roles that a principal takes and I think that it should consume a fair amount of a principal's time.

> Well, I'd have to say that it's the most important thing if you had to rank it. . . . You can't build something up that's not there. If the kids aren't happy, you've got nothing. . . . So instructional supervision is very important because that's the way people deal with children.
>
> Are you willing to buy the fact that if you are a principal of a school, instructional leadership or the instructional program is the number one responsibility?

Two of the principals stressed the importance of instructional supervision by expressing the view that their role as principal and their role as instructional supervisor were synonomous. As one stated, "To me, instructional supervision *is* the principal. That's his role." Another principal exclaimed, "It's my job! It is all those little things that I started out to say. It's all those things that are linked in a particular chain. Link by link. The final link is attached to the first link. Everything that happens in the school. That makes up instructional leadership for me."

The meaning of instructional supervision, due its multi-faceted nature and complexity, is not easily captured in a phrase or a sentence or a paragraph. As the interviewees have indicated, it is not a singular, finite, event. Rather, it is an integration and overlapping of many components that are on-going. It is a concept that includes the notions of student learning, pedagogic interaction, human relationships, curriculum, communication, academic and non-academic skills, philosophy, vision, and perhaps most importantly meeting student needs. The sections which follow serve to clarify, enhance and reinforce the meaning of instructional supervison that was initiated in this section.

What Do You Do as an Instructional Supervisor?

The response to this question seemed to evolve naturally from the principals' explanation of their meaning of instructional supervision. Many of the principals described what they do as part of their response in reference to what instructional supervision meant

for them. Their actions as instructional supervisors embodied their meanings of instructional supervision. The principals provided numerous ways in which they acted as instructional supervisors and I have initially organized their responses according to five broad categories. Following this, their responses to four hypothetical situations presented to them help to reveal more specific actions taken.

Observing Others and Being Observed

Without exception, all of the principals in this study mentioned that being in classrooms to observe teachers and the act of teaching was of primary importance in their role of instructional supervisor. However, the nature of their involvement and the amount of time donated to this sort of activity varied in each individual case. For example, to one principal instructional supervision primarily meant "gettting a sense of feel for instruction. . . that the teachers are involved with the students." Accordingly, he placed a very high priorty on being in each teacher's classroom and ensured that "I am in everyone's classroom at least once a week. So that over the course of the year, I will be able to have a minimum of at least forty to fifty visits with each teacher." His visitations were not always uniform in their purpose or their length.

> Now, the length of time that I might spend in a teacher's classroom may be 10 minutes to an hour. It all depends. It depends on several factors. Whether or not, when I'm making my observation, I feel that the lesson, whether it be a very supportive lesson or whether I feel that there are components that are lacking, necessitating that I stay for a greater length of time to get a better overall understanding.

In relation to the purpose of his observations, he differentiated between a performance review and an evaluation. The aim of performance review was growth of the individual and competency was not a concern. However, an evaluative observation did include the question of competency and its aim was to bring about necessary improvement:

> First of all, I separate the difference between evaluation and performance review. Performance review, for myself, is a process of growth which means that everyone, regardless of whether they're a first-year teacher or have been in the field

> for 30 years, that each year is a year of growth. . . . It has to do with growth. I start out with the premise that I am not questioning your competency. The performance review does not, for myself, question competency. The evaluation can take place at any time. The first day of classes or the last day of classes. But if a teacher interacts with a student in a way that is not supportive of our goal of student centeredness, then I will evaluate on the specifics of that involvement, that that is separated from his performance review in terms of growth. If I question the academic program or the pro-social skill program that the teacher is involved with, with the student, then I will take that up specifically. Initially, it's to share information to make an improvement and a change. If, for example, the teacher chose not to work towards improvement or was having difficulty, then I must intensify my involvement. If the teacher's having difficulty making the changes, then I certainly want to bring in other resources. If the teacher is refusing to be involved, then it becomes hard-core evaluation and the focus is on misconduct. As the direct line supervisor, I'm requesting a particular course of action from a teacher. If the teacher is refusing that course of action, then that is misconduct. And so, the evaluation would be on misconduct and then, of course, all the specifics of that.

Another principal arranged to observe teachers on a regular basis, but qualified that he would "always have some kind of focus determined" before the classroom visitation. The focus was usually related to a professional development activity:

> The focus would usually come out of an in-service activity that we were undertaking as a group. We may have been working on enhancing questioning skills or lesson design or some kind of a teaching strategy to do with peer teaching or something like that. And then with almost a contract between myself and the teacher, I would go in and give them feedback related to the skills or the strategies that we'd been talking about in the in-service for example. But there were two sides to that contract. The other side was that the teacher would design a lesson in which they could demonstrate those skills.

He continued to say that sometimes he would visit some teachers more than others and that,

> Interestingly enough that was often because of a request from a teacher. And again usually related to something going on at an inservice. They knew that their next scheduled observation wasn't going to be until a month from now. They were working on something and they felt good about it and they wanted to share it so they invited me in to observe and we would do that.

He also mentioned that he didn't think that "the principal has to be the only person giving feedback to the teachers in order to be undertaking instructional supervision." He would take over the classroom duties of his teachers to allow them to observe another teacher. He saw this as being beneficial in two ways:

> And that does two things. It conveys a belief in the professional competence of your staff. You're saying that you know that the teacher has the ability to give some feedback. I'm not the only one. It also demonstrates to the teacher that you know enough about real life circumstances because you're taking their class and that you're actually working with them. . . . Anyway, so that's what I would try to do at least once a year for every teacher so that you would probably have three personal observations planned and one where they would exchange and observe each other.

Other principals talked about less formal ways of visiting classrooms. In these informal visitations, in a sense, the principals were not only observing, but were the ones that were being observed. They talked about "being visible" or "management by walking about." They let people know that they were present and interested and it also gave them a sense of what was happening in their school. One principal would relieve teachers for personal matters and viewed it as an opportunity to gain a sense of the classroom without the teacher being present:

> You walk around and see what units teachers are working on, whether that's Math, whether that's Social Studies. Also, any opportunity you get to take a class for a teacher, you should definitely take it. Don't advertise that yeah, that's what you would like to do, but if your teacher's leaving early for a dental appointment or something, make sure you volunteer to take that. Most teachers will not take advantage of that and you will see what's on the walls, you'll see their plans, you'll see what is actually going on in the classroom so that you have a better knowledge of what really each teacher has.

Another informal approach, that of a principal of a larger school, was to "be in classrooms a lot" but not with the purpose of evaluation. He depended on his department heads to "stay close to the day to day operation" and created a faculty council that met weekly to assist him in keeping in touch with what was happening.

One principal strongly emphasized the importance of being seen teaching himself. He thought that one of the roles of an instructional supervisor was to be an effective model. Being seen teaching served two purposes. It developed credibility with the staff and also enhanced the relationship with teachers by showing that the principal was "not perfect":

> I don't think a principal can exercise instructional leadership unless they can demonstrate that they are also excellent teachers. So while I didn't have any formal regular teaching assignments, I did a lot of teaching. Very often with the teacher observing and later we could talk about what kinds of lessons were taught, teaching strategies, teaching skills - those kinds of things. So that's one role that I think is sometimes overlooked when you talk about instructional leadership and supervision in the school and that is the role of model. And it may be asking an awful lot of principals of high schools to be a model in that way, but I think that when it can happen it makes the instructional supervision of the school better in the sense that teachers are more willing to listen to someone that they know can do can do the job and who has feet of clay like they do.

In contrast, another principal, while acknowledging that teaching a class would make him a better curricular leader, felt that with all of the interruptions that are inherent in his job as principal, it would not be better for the students to have him as their regular teacher.

In addition to being seen as a model of teaching skills other interpretations of modelling were presented:

> You have to learn to mask it somehow so that people in crisis can always come to you and they know that they can get a pretty smooth, level response. You may be churning inside over what's happened, but somehow somebody has to be calm in this moment. That's the model and that's part of instructional responsibility.

As well, the role of a principal being a model was not exclusive to being a model for teachers. One interviewee described the importance of being a model for students. He used the example of apologizing to students if he was unable to keep an appointment and suggested that this would be reinforcing the non-academic component of instruction.

Clarifying Goals and Expectations

For many of the principals this activity started at the beginning of the year or when they arrived at a school as its new principal. They felt that developing a school philosophy or vision was an essential foundation from which the instructional activities of the school would evolve. One principal talked about the first two operational days of a school year as being the most important of the school year:

> The opening two days of school are probably the most important two days of the whole year. And so you plan to the nth degree for those two days to make sure that

> the staff realizes, "Hey, this is our focus. This is where we're going, this is our vision for the school, these are our priorities." You know, our objectives are set from those and then, I think people understand.

Two principals talked about being new to their schools and reinforced the importance of establishing "mission statements" as a first task. As one interviewee pointed out:

> We began as a staff, right from the very beginning, to adopt a statement of beliefs. I did not even want to start off the school year without the adoption of a statement of beliefs, in that I believe that schools must be student-centered. In sharing that with the staff, what does that mean? And so that we begin the school year with that focus, so that at any time during the year, if there is a problem or concern, we can address it in terms of meeting student needs and in that instruction involves all areas and aspects of student involvement, then in which way can we make the instructional component supportive to student needs?

The second principal stated in regard to his first year, "and so we had to spend a lot of time to come up with some sort of vision statements. What is our curriculum supposed to do for our kids?"

Another form of clarifying goals and expections occurred at an individual level and three of the principals mentioned having "one-on-ones" with teachers. This is where the principal would have a conference with an individual teacher at the beginning of the year, and the teacher would have an opportunity to share the goals that they had for themselves in the upcoming school year. At this time the principal would provide feedback and reinforcement to the teacher and also ensure that the teachers goals were in some way linked to the mission of the school. One principal in particular emphasized the aspect of growth of the individual as being of utmost importance:

> So, in meeting with the teachers, I ask and request for them to come up with at least one personal goal that would look at growth in regards to student centeredness. Therefore, over the course of the year, they are going to be making their classrooms a little bit better in terms of the instructional involvement that they have with students. I, as a school principal, may also request one school goal of them, which I shared with them in terms of growth. It has to do with growth.

Clarification of expectations did not always occur in a proactive manner. Principals described situations in which they reacted either positively or negatively but in both cases with the common purpose of reinforcing their expectations. The positive reinforcement might be in the form of a note or they might drop into a class and give a teacher words of praise for fine work. On the other hand, direct confrontation might have to be used to let the teacher know that "I cannot accept this." For example, one principal described a situation in which teacher yelled at a student and told the student to "shut up!" He made it very clear that treating students in that manner was not consistent with their established school goals. Another principal described a situation in which he had to approach a teacher directly about her teaching methods. In this case, the teacher was using worksheets exclusively and this was not consistent with the school's approach to the teaching of language.

Facilitating Teachers and Instruction.

Principals referred to a variety of ways in which they attempted to facilitate teachers and the instructional process. As one principal stated, " I can't deliver curriculum but I do know that I can facilitate people who have ideas." One of the most immediate ways in which this could be done was by ensuring that teachers had the required materials available:

> I think you have to make sure that the teachers have the tools to do the best job that they can and again, that'll vary with the school you're at and the people that are in the building as to how much of a priority you make that. For instance, if a teacher at the elementary level, is using a whole language approach to Language Arts, is the school or can the school provide the materials that that teacher needs? So, that's one thing you can do, and really, it's very easy to do. On a priority system, I would think that would be second nature to most principals, to make sure that their teachers are equipped with the hard materials.

In addition to the provision of materials, principals were willing to offer resources of a different kind. Support for the teachers was a primary way in which principals felt that they could facilitate teachers and it was given in a variety of ways. One principal described

a type of psychological support and resource support that let teachers know that they were not alone when they were involved in some sort of change:

> What you must provide them with is a tremendous backup of resource, advice, assistance, consultation, and so part of the model here of making change is to see that no staff member would be left with the feeling that they are by themselves in terms of understanding either their involvement with students or how to make more supportive involvement and change with their students. I operate on the basis that whatever advice, assistance, support, materials you need, you will get.

Principals were also very willing to share their expertise with the teachers but they also recognized that they were not and could not be experts in all fields. When they found that they could not assist the teacher themselves, they made arrangements to involve specialists, other teachers or consultants. As one interviewee explained,

> I say to the teacher,"Allow me to understand the student's concern and what you have got planned for him." I don't come to the teacher as the expert. I believe that the teacher knows more about the student's specific needs and concerns than I do. . . . I can offer some suggestions that I might have, but then I say, "I don't want you to worry about this. Help is on the way." The district has an abundance of support in consultants, specialists, materials."

Listening to teachers was described as being an important form of support. One principal presented this aspect by referring to the metaphor of the temperature taker:

> Outside of that, to take the input that they give and listen to them, in the same way that you listen to kids. This just came back to mind as one of my philosophical approaches-- the temperature taker. As an instructional leader, you're taking temperatures. There's all sorts of things you're taking the temperature of. Sometimes you ask people to take that temperature and feed the conditions back to you. If they run into some hot spots, well then they're to let you know about those.

Time was also recognized as being a valuable resource and principals made attempts to provide extra time to teachers to facilitate their instructional endeavors. Principals described covering classes for teachers so that they could visit other schools or attend inservices. They would also bring in substitute teachers to enable their teachers to work on program development: "You bring in a half-day sub for the elementary teacher who's agreed to take on the junior high kids and develop a program. Give her half a day to do

some curriculum development and clean up in the art room, get it organized, get ready, consolidate."

Principals also wanted teachers to know that they were valued and that their efforts were appreciated. This might take the form of a personal note to the teacher, or as one principal described, "Sometimes it's not so much a direct comment as it is an action that you take that lets them know that they're valued. It might be a comment in assembly, it might be a direct one-on-one, it might be a suggestion that lets them know that they're pretty important."

Two principals talked about creating an environment that was more conducive for instruction to take place. In the first instance, the principal was referring to the physical environment of his school and described the changes that he was making by modifying open area classrooms to make them closed classrooms and by soundproofing rooms. In the second instance, the principal was referring to the school climate and described the task of removing obstacles to allow his teachers to teach:

> Teachers in our schools are there to teach and if I can as principal create for them a climate which makes them more comfortable in meeting their daily challenges, then they will succeed instructionally. A most important aspect of instructional supervision is ensuring that the school climate is healthy. Teachers cannot be expected to be "policemen" and teach effectively at the same time. The principal, if need be, must assume the policeman's role in order that good instruction may be effected. Through open and constructive communication these things that concern teachers and affect climate--poor student behaviour, non-productibe use of time--become a responsibility of the principal. He is responsible for removing obstacles from teacher paths and helps teachers enjoy themselves and their work in the classroom.

Planning and Organizing

In describing their actions, principals expressed strongly that instructional supervision was not something that just happened. It required initial thought, and then planning, organizing, and commitment in its undertaking. Many of the principals described the numerous demands on their time but because they placed a very high priority on being

in the classroom to see "what's happening", they made a point of planning their visitations and writing them down. As one principal noted, "I said I did that on a regular basis and I have to be fair to principals by saying that it's very difficult to do that routinely. There's a lot of demand on principals' time. If you're going to do instructional supervision you've got to write it on your calendar. And that's what I did."

The principals in this study were part of a school-based budgeting system and therefore had control of the money allocated to the school. Two of the principals referred to the act of allocating of the money as being a component of instructional supervision: " Budget planning--put your money where your mouth is. Are we into education for the kids or are we into it for a new xerox machine?"

One principal in particular talked about organizing and planning on a school-wide basis. He talked about timetabling, grade organization, and special programs:

> Organization, planning, just the organization of the building, has to do with instructional supervision. I mean, you've got to decide, "Hey, am I going to have a primary opportunity class, am I going to have split grades, are we going to have integrated classrooms with adaptation kids, or are we going to have separate entities, are we going to have an academic challenge program, or in fact are we going to send those kids to a District Center?" All of those organization for instruction type things, timetables, have to do with instructional supervision.

Encouraging the Involvement of Others

Principals realized that they were not the only participants in the process of instructional supervision, therefore they actively pursued the involvement of others. One way in which they chose to involve teachers was to develop strong professional development programs. As one principal stated, "I feel that professional development is very important. That's where a large part of our budget is set aside." He continued to describe the importance of involvement in the Teacher Effectiveness Program: "One of the things that I felt was important to get people involved and working together was the Teacher Effectiveness Program." He recognized that it was expensive but he felt that the

benefits of discussing the instructional aspects with other colleagues were well worth it and noted that everyone on his staff at present was involved with the program in some form. All of the other respondents indicated some degree of involvement with the Teacher Effectiveness Program. Many of them used it as a basis for their observation of teachers or to help clarify what teachers should be doing in the classroom. When describing his expectations of teachers, one interviewee said, "We're really teacher effectiveness people. We believe in it and we're always involved."

Another form of professional development mentioned by one of the interviewees was an extensive weekly program based on the model advocated by Bruce Joyce (1980). This involved an extended working day for the teachers four days per week to allow for early dismissal of the students on the day chosen for a professional development activity. He described the cycle of involvement as being understanding the skill, demonstration of the skill, practicing the skill in a safe setting, and taking the skill into the classroom and practicing. His primary role in the process was providing coaching and feedback to the teacher practicing the skill in the classroom. He also attempted to free other teachers to perform the coaching role as well.

In addition to the forementioned approaches to professional development, principals encouraged teachers to seek personal and professional growth. As one principal pointed out,

> Part of my responsibility as an instructional supervisor is to see that the staff are stretched. Staff have to understand that their capacities are not finite. I do believe that it is my job to help them discern and rediscover talents, strategies, methods and materials at these times in their endeavours when they feel that they have done their best and can do no better. I do honestly believe that the capacity of human resilience and resourcefulness is such that we can always do a little better, go a little further, even though it may be felt that the end of the road has been reached today. Humans may often be the catalyst in altering these perceptions.

Approaches mentioned were encouraging teachers to attend inservices, keeping the staff informed about professional development opportunities, having consultants come out

to the school, freeing teachers for intervisitations, or giving teachers on staff opportunities to share ideas with other staff members.

To share some of their workload and at the same time utilize knowledgable people on staff and encourage their involvement, principals would delegate responsibilities. Two of the principals mentioned utilizing their assistant principals in the supervisory process. One principal mentioned that the involvement of his assistant principals allowed him the additional advantage of being able to work on "creative curriculum": "Having two assistant principals is a tremendous advantage to me. They each have their own particular areas. . . . So from my point of view, it provides me with a tremendous channelling of responsibility and frees me to get involved in creative curriculum."

Another principal emphasized that it was impossible for a principal to be knowledgeable in all of the curricular fields and so he would delegate responsibilities to staff members to utilize their skills and knowledge and to stimulate their professional growth:

> Well, one thing is to take a look at each of the areas and delegate those responsibilities to other people. For instance, in the science area, to look at _____ and hold him accountable in a sense to review programs and to add to programs to make science a focus for this year for our budget process. So that's a leadership step. In other areas like health and phys. ed., to give _____ a task to find out what the resources are that are available within the school, relative to the list that's available to us- see where the needs are. Doing that stimulates everyone to look at the curriculum and I guess what I'm saying there, again it's part of philosophy, is that you can't do it all yourself. It's impossible. Anyone that thinks that they are the curricular leader in every area for every little piece in the school is going to drive themselves nuts. There's no way that you can. You're certainly responsible for it ultimately, but you have to also be able to know what to access.

The involvement of others was not exclusive to teachers. Parents and the greater community and support staff were seen as being an important part of the instructional process as well:

> As part of our statement of beliefs, you will recall that it says that the responsibility for teaching children lies with parents, teachers, and significant members in the community as well. And when we take a look at the instructional part, let's take a

> look at Language Arts. I don't expect the owner of the local Mac's store to be assisting Johnny with his reading skills, but I do expect the parents to be involved in that. When it comes to the area of pro-social skills, appropriate use of language, I believe that the teachers must assist Johnny in the appropriate use of language during school, the parents must teach Johnny the appropriate use of language at the home, and Mr. Owner of the Mac's Store must also assist with the appropriate use of language from Johnny when Johnny is in his store or in the community.

To illustrate, he described talking to the local Mac's store owner to request that he stop the sale of cards that were inappropriate for the students of his school. To assist him with his decision and course of action he first solicited and gained the support of his parent advisory group.

Another principal described involving parents in his school by having them assist teachers in the classroom and by making them a part of the school budget process: "So at our school now, I've brought in parents. The parents are very much involved in what's going on at the school."

How do you supervise the beginning teacher? the excellent teacher? the teacher in crisis? the retiring teacher?

The five preceding categories represented the actions described by principals when they were asked the general question of how they acted as instructional supervisors. In an attempt to allow principals greater opportunity for sharing personal experiences and more specific actions, principals were presented with four different types of teachers and asked how they did or would interact with them: How did or would you instructionally supervise the beginning teacher? the excellent teacher? the teacher in crisis? the teacher near to retirement?

The Beginning Teacher

The manner in which the principals responded to this situation indicated that they had a very favorable, optimistic outlook towards the supervision of a beginning teacher.

The new teacher was viewed as being young, enthusiastic, and unspoiled and thus someone deserving of careful attention as three of the principals point out:

> To expand, the new teacher coming into the profession, the baby, now there is a really precious person because if they are not treated correctly, not nurtured, looked after early in their teaching, then they could become a teacher in crisis, in short order.

> The new teacher I very much enjoy working with and I see them, for the most part, if I was to use a stereotypical example of the new teacher, as being full of energy and motivation and willingness to become the best that they can become. And in most cases I find them almost to be, if I can use the example of a colt, they want to run when yet they can't. And if they go too quickly, they'll fall down. And they're just wanting to grow up, big and strong, and to be the thoroughbred in their class. My experience with new teachers in terms of instructional supervision, has been that they are just chomping at the bit, wanting materials and wanting new things.

> I guess with most beginning teachers, they're very, very, keen and they can't wait to start.

Orientation. Many of the principals indicated that one of the first steps to take with a beginning teacher was to orient them to their new surroundings. This involved " letting them know where things are" and introducing them to other staff members. As one principal explained, "Help them to find where equipment is, and make sure they know who the librarian is, who the counsellor is, who the resource people are. I also give them a previous year's handbook and tell them to go through it and if they have any questions to make sure they come back to see me. "

Included in the orientation, were efforts by the principals to "make beginning teachers feel comfortable." Two of the principals recognized that beginning teachers may be anxious and somewhat cautious in their relationship with the principal and so they made attempts to "break the barriers." As one principal related, he did this by talking to them and showing an early trust in them:

> I don't think that a lot of new teachers feel extremely comfortable in talking to a principal. . . . So they may feel threatened. So, there's a barrier to break down which, I think, is the principal's job to show them that they're a colleague and that they're involved in teaching and that teaching is important and so are children. But

> also to be supportive of this new teacher. They have new ideas that they want to try and so you don't say "No, you've got to stick to this book." So I think that you've got to give them that trust, just like you would an experienced teacher but you have to work closer with them.

Another important part of the orientation for the new teacher was the sharing of the school mission and expectations to help them focus on what the school sees as being important and what is expected of them: " When they first come to the school, they get a package that we go over- my expectations, and all the rest of it." He further explained that he would "spend some time with them, talk to their classes, so they would get to know how I relate to kids."

Support, Patience, and Positive Interaction. Following the orientation, principals strongly emphasized a supportive approach to the beginning teacher: "New teachers, I think it's imperative that there's a support system." Many of the principals, as a first step, would arrange for the new teacher to "buddy-up" with another experienced member of staff who was working in a similar area. It was felt that the "buddy" could serve as a resource person for the new teacher in a variety of ways:

> We always did the buddy-up business of a new teacher with a good teacher and arranged time for them to intervisit, for the new teacher to observe some of the things that are going on in other classrooms. This was never forced on them. Nor should it be or could it be. But to provide an opportunity for the new teacher to have another teacher coming to just work with them in their classroom. Talk with them about what they're doing. Those sorts of things.
>
> It would be somebody who's taught the same kind of things that they have so I think that would be the first step. You want them to feel that they're not sort of all on their own and that you want to make it possible for them to learn the ropes with a minimum of stress and then also, make sure that they have the things that they need.

One principal recognized the advantage of the informality of the buddy system: " It really helps to assist them if an assistant or counsellor or peer is able to work with them without having to take it to an administrative level because I think everyone has this feeling that once it's taken to the administrative level, something else happens."

In addition to supporting the new teacher by arranging for them to work with a buddy, principals also made a point of letting the new teacher know about the external support system that was available to them: "One of the things I think we also do is we try to make sure that they know that aside from department heads, that there are consultants that are available too and a teacher effectiveness program." Because of the nature of the students in his school, another principal recognized disciplining students as usually being an area of concern and so he would involve a new teacher in discipline inservices to assist them with their new assignment.

Principals were empathic to the challenges that a new teacher faced and this was revealed with their emphasis on the importance of interacting with the new teacher in a positive, caring, and patient manner:

> You have to give them time to grow, the new teachers. And you have to visit them frequently in the classroom and give them some positives about what they're doing. The new teacher absolutely requires feedback. Otherwise they have no idea if they're doing good, bad, or indifferent.
>
> Well, I think with the new teacher, you spend a fair amount of time with them, just talking to them and letting them express to you what's happened.
>
> What can I share with them to make them as strong a teacher as they possibly can be in the short time that they have been involved directly with students? And so, my involvement there has been I would say for the most part, very positive. And very growth-directed.

The Excellent Teacher

In our discussions, all of the interviewees made a point of recognizing the great value of having excellent teachers on staff. As one principal stressed, "I really need them. They're just so key. They're people who are up and efficient and effective. Boy, they just do so much for the place."

Showing Appreciation and Giving Goodies. Paradoxically, principals also recognized that because the excellent teachers were so independent, self-motivated, and knowledgable that they "tend to get ignored." One principal gave the illustration that if he

had some free time and had to make a choice of spending time with a marginal teacher or an excellent teacher, the urgency of the situation would dictate that he should spend time with the marginal teacher. However, recognizing that this is often the case, he set up a system with his assistant principal to ensure that the excellent teacher was not overlooked: "What I do is I get my assistant principal to help me in those areas and say, 'Would you please go and visit so-and-so's classroom because I know they're doing an excellent job and let's just give them some strokes and we don't get an opportunity to do that very often.'" Another principal stated, "The excellent teacher, they tend to get ignored, so you then have to find ways to, in a very real way, let them know how you appreciate what they're doing. Or give them feedback on what they're doing."

One principal saw "giving goodies" as a way of showing his appreciation: " I try to make sure that the really good teacher gets some goodies--that good performance pays off." The "goodies" that this principal referred to were such things as release time when a substitute was in the school, or opportunities for professional development. Rewards mentioned by other principals were such things as purchasing new materials for them, giving them positions of responsibility(ie. language arts coordinator) or making time for them--to come in on request to offer coaching or feedback on a lesson.

Principals suggested other ways in which they showed their appreciation and let the excellent teacher know that they were valued. They would give the excellent teacher direct positive feedback through formal interactions such as one-on-one conferences or " type A or B teacher effectiveness conferences". One principal explained that

> Sometimes it's not so much a direct comment, as it is an action that you take that lets them know that they're valued. It might be a comment in an assembly, it might be a direct one-on-one, it might be a suggestion to them that lets them know they're pretty important.

Principals also described other informal ways of recognizing the abilities and efforts of the excellent teacher such as a brief positive comment in the classroom or in the hallway or through the use of positive notes such as happygrams.

As well many principals mentioned that they would try to provide opportunities for the excellent teachers to share their talents with others. As one principal emphasized,

> Excellent teachers need to be told they are excellent- often. They need positive affirmation in order that they will continue to be excellent. One of the best ways to reward excellent teachers is to give them the opportunity to "show off" their talents. Sharing their talents with other teachers. Opening up their classrooms to their colleagues and professionals from other schools should be encouraged.

Respect and Support. Principals were very willing to offer support to the excellent teacher but in most cases because of their respect for the teacher, the decision about what kind of support was needed was left with the teacher. This is illustrated by the question asked of the excellent teacher by one principal,"What do you want to be involved with and to happen for you in the course of this year that will make you, as a professional, more accomplished?" The excellent teacher was viewed as being very capable of knowing what they wanted and therefore principals displayed a willingness to assist them instead of attempting to direct their endeavours: "I guess what you would do is let them know that you're there for any assistance and if they need any assistance, make sure they call on you."

Another principal pointed out that excellent teachers tend to take risks and one way that he could offer his support was when they were undertaking novel endeavours: "And I would always trust them and back them up to the fullest. I think that's important because excellent teachers I think are trying different things and the public isn't always necessarily aware and accepting of different things and they need that support to keep being excellent."

Intervisitation to other schools was described by one principal as one way in which excellent teachers could learn to appreciate themselves:

> But I've also done this, where I've sent them to other schools, where they have gone to observe what's taking place in other classrooms. And in coming back, it's interesting how excited they can become about their own program. Because, in going out, when they come back, they can share renewed excitement about their own class because an excellent teacher knows what to look for. They know what to look for in terms of the lesson planning. They also know what to look for in terms of the materials that are being used. They also know what to look for in terms of how the teacher interacts with the student, with the more able student, with the less able student, and they begin to see other people who are said to be good teachers. And then they compare themselves and they can feel this renewed sense of success by seeing others.

The Teacher in Crisis

When sharing their thoughts and experiences in regard to the teacher in crisis what became most evident was that principals saw this situation as being very difficult to work through and that an element of suffering was involved for the teacher, the principal, staff relationships, and the students. One principal empathized with the situation that the teacher in crisis faces and stated that it was his duty to help them: "Teachers in crisis suffer. The principal's duty here is to help these teachers succeed and receive as much if not more attention as the other subjects mentioned above." A second principal talked about how unsettling it was for him to confront a teacher with their difficulties: "It's really easy to say here talking to you, but it's just the most uncomfortable thing that I can imagine or that I've ever experienced." Another principal alluded to the negative effects on students when a teacher in crisis is in the classroom: "He was in the classroom for about five years and there's about 150 kids that suffered for it." The erosion of relationships between the staff and the principal was addressed when another interviewee said,

> I think the relationship that exists between the principal and the teacher at that time will suffer immediately but should things get better and should the teacher start to see a positive improvement and start to receive that kind of feedback from the principal then I think the relationship can rebuild. It may never get back to what it was at one time but engaging that kind of process affects more than the relationship between the principal and that particular teacher. There aren't any secrets on staff.

> Pretty soon all the teachers know that there's something different going on between the principal and this teacher. That between you and the teacher that there is a serious evaluation going on and they start to wonder, "What are the motives of this principal?"

Although principals recognized the difficult task of dealing with a teacher in crisis, they also recognized that it was their reponsibility to become involved: "When they are in severe difficulty, I think it's the principal's responsibility to do something about it. . . .It's very uncomfortable to do but I think it needs to be done."

Recognizing the problem. One of the first ways in which principals became involved was to help the teacher in crisis to recognize the problem:

> I think its important to sit down with a teacher who is in difficulty and tell them that from what you see they're in trouble and the problems that they have are this and this. That you'd like to work with them on improving, but to be very honest the bottom line is that their performance is not adequate and that it needs to improve if they're to continue in this profession.
>
> In your one-on-one interview, you probably would go over a lot of things: how they're doing, what's their previous history. You try to establish some kind of base so that person feels comfortable.

However, recognizing the problem was not always a straight forward matter. Two principals found that the problems of teachers in crisis were often beyond the scope of the school:

> I found that, in most cases, it was not just the school that was presenting problems and concerns for this individual teacher. That this individual was bringing, in fact, to school, pressures of the outside world. Either a decaying marriage, family problems, monetary problems, or that they had a perception of student interaction that did not meet with the realities of school on a day to day basis.

Another principal emphasized the importance of recognizing that the problems of the teachers in crisis were indeed *their* problems and he would assist them with *their* problems:

> How do you help them with their problem and I say "their problem" because it is their problem. It only becomes mine so far as I'm responsible for the whole school and so I take ownership, but not of their problem. And so in your dealings with them, how do you help them and still leave the problem with them to solve because they have to solve it?

Noting that most of the teachers in crisis that he has had to deal with were teachers that have been with the system for a number of years, one interviewee saw the problem as being a problem of the school system and wondered why "they weren't counselled out of the school system fifteen or twenty years ago."

Two other principals partially answered his question by alluding to the point that the teacher in crisis may have been an adequate teacher at one time but they may have simply "run out of gas." As one said, "Sometimes they lack the talent. But often because they're just not interested anymore." In the second instance, the principal described, "And sometimes even if they're shown how excellent teachers perform, they can't suddenly become that excellent teacher because they don't have the jam. They've lost it and I don't know where it does go."

Utilizing a process. After recognizing the problem for the teacher in crisis and themselves, many of the respondents made reference to a process that was developed by the employee relations department of their school board. They found the recommended procedures to be very useful as a guide to help them decide on a course of action: " My assistant principal is our teacher in crisis specialist. He's gone through the briefings on the kinds of things to do. So we try to use a clearcut process and it's well documented." The documentation suggested by this principal was mentioned as a very important part of the process by a number of other principals as well. This principal also made a point of emphasizing that following a process "doesn't mean that we aren't trying to give help."

The kinds of help discussed by the principals were many and varied. One interviewee mentioned that they had a psychiatrist helping one of their teachers this year. Another principal discussed the Canadian Mental Health Association as a possible source of " getting assistance to some of the other areas of stress in their lives." Many principals talked about getting into the classroom and observing the teacher and then offering their

suggestions for improvement. They also brought in consultants or arranged for visitations with other teachers. Two principals mentioned the importance of placing the teacher in crisis in a situation where they have an opportunity to succeed or in non-instructional places " to minimize the kid damage that he does in the school." But as this interviewee pointed out, this type of placement also has risks for the administrator " because in doing that, it almost looks like you're rewarding him for being a poor teacher. . . . you are including yourself at risk too there because you look like you're incompetent."

After attempting to help the teacher in crisis, principals had to make an assessment about the progress that the teacher had made and career decisions could be the result:

> You have to make sure that you set up an actual performance review system for that particular teacher; in other words, if you're saying your classroom management is bad, you're not teaching anything, and all of these other things that that person might be doing, you have to set that out on paper and say, "These are the things that I'm going to be looking for in 6 weeks time," and give that teacher time to correct them, or at least make an improvement. If it isn't corrected or improved, you have to note that in writing, send it to that teacher and then set up new performance goals for that teacher. If it still isn't working, then you have to have a meeting of the minds to decide where that person's going to go.

Beyond the Process. Principals recognized that utilizing the recommended process would not solve all of their problems. The human aspect of working with the teacher in crisis could not be overlooked. As one principal said, "But all you can do is just try to be humane about it and be up front and make sure that anything that's written down is provided to everybody and be consistent. . . . It's a completely different ball game and it isn't fun." A second principal reinforced this point when he said, "This is going to sound awful corny but it's true. You have to keep doing what you think is best. Treat people with respect and dignity and live through it. It would be nice to say that we can avoid those kinds of issues in a school, but I don't think you can."

The Retiring Teacher

When presented with this situation, principals were quick to point out that age wasn't necessarily an indication of performance. They related experiences with retiring teachers that exhibited a wide range of performance. Many of the principals felt that a critical factor in the performance of the teacher near to retirement was the motivation and attitude that the teacher possessed: "This can be a bitter-sweet occasion depending on the attitude of the retiree."

The Teacher Near to Retirement Experiencing Difficulties. The situation that principals found the most challenging was with a retiring teacher that had lost their interest in children and their motivation to teach: "It's a struggle, a constant struggle." Principals elicited a sense of helplessness about what to do with a retiring teacher that was having difficulties. They implied that their options were somewhat limited partly due to the involvement of unions or policies of school boards and also due in part to a respect for the service that the teacher had provided during their career. One principal described a present situation in which he had a teacher near to retirement that had "lost her spark" but she was still doing an adequate job in the classroom, and so rather than upset her or the students by intervening in some way, he offered her quiet support and made efforts to talk to her regularly. He felt fortunate that she was competent even if " the spark had gone out" and indicated that he wasn't exactly sure what he would do if she was having a great negative impact on the students.

> I don't know what I would do if it was somebody who was really having a negative effect in the classroom. You'd want to get to the point where you'd pull them or at least I think I would. But then we're all so tied into our unions and our own policy with the School Board that says you got to be nice, you've got to work with them, you got to be supportive. All these things I agree with to a certain point, but I think there are some times when you have to step in and say " Hey, the shit's hit the fan. Let's get this straightened out. There are kids there."

The effect on the students had a great bearing on what course of action he took and this point was reiterated by many other principals as well: "First of all, it's the kids. That's got to be the priority. So if you can maintain the individual within the school in a positive way. . . . You can't just sit and let the people finish off their glide." To assist himself in making a decision, another principal personalized the situation by asking the question," Would I want my own child in this classroom?"

One suggested course of action was to move the retiree towards termination or early retirement but this was probably the least preferred option. Instead, many of the principals talked about "carrying the person" for the balance of the year. Two of the principals spoke specifically about creating positions for teachers near to retirement that were having difficulties:

> It's sad but true, often times your teacher that's very close to retirement, or is retiring, is in a position that may not exist at that school if that person wasn't there. A good example could be counselling, resource room, or library and unfortunately those seem to be the three areas that it does apply to. . . . And so sometimes, indeed, it's just easier to create a position, carry that person for a year and then you know that it's finished. But it's a tough one. I don't really have an answer for that one.

> To make a long story short, this teacher finally served her last two years as an additional librarian to that particular school, in that it was also felt that the teacher should not leave this school in the last two years. They have been there for the last several years, and this should be the school that they retire from. There was a lot of tears.

Instead of creating a position for the retiring teacher, another principal would leave the person where they were and would try "to find a good supply (substitute) teacher that we know we can depend on and hope that they'll do the best they can."

Another principal described a situation that demonstrated just how much work is involved when supervising the teacher near to retirement:

> The particular teacher that we had last year required a tremendous amount of supervision. Collectively, the administration had to go into his classroom every week and make suggestions to him for improvement. Tell him again what he was doing right, as compared to what he was doing wrong. Give him the feedback

> from the students that we were receiving. You know, the students would come in and complain to us that this was what's happening in the classroom. So you've got to give him that feedback and say, "Now what can we do about that?"

The Teacher Near To Retirement Not Experiencing Difficulties. When discussing these types of teachers, principals expressed a great deal of respect for the knowledge and skills that the teachers possessed. Principals indicated that they would try to created opportunities that would allow these teachers to share their talents:

> One of the thing that I've done, not as deliberately as I will probably in the future, is I have made some very significant changes in teachers' assignments as they get near retirement where they are asked, "What would you think of working with this? You know, your background really could help us get this set up for after your leave." Make them feel that they're going to leave something behind and that maybe that they could do something special. Give them some time to write some curriculum or something. In Math for example, there's a case of one lady that worked on some math curriculum. If they're good people, it's really worth that effort because they've really got something to contribute and you want to stimulate them.

Another principal talked about the reluctance of some of these teachers to " let the students benefit from their wealth of experience" and so he would attempt to recognize and draw out these benefits:

> But I've also found that sometimes, there is a reluctance on their part to bring them out and highlight them, because the materials sometimes don't have the dressing qualities that some of the new materials do. And I find that, in talking to the teachers, I say, "Tell me, what has been the most exciting lesson you have ever done with students? Or a series of lessons that you've done? Or a project or an assignment?" And their eyes will light up and their face will just light up and they'll think back and then they'll focus on something and it might be something that happened, sometimes 20 years ago, that they did. They could take something that, in fact, happened 20 years ago that they remember as one of the highlights of their career, and then, how might they take that excitement and make it into something that their children of today could benefit from? So in speaking to them, I find that the teacher who'd had many years of experience, brings such wealth with them.

This principal continued by stating that the would treat the "superb retiring teacher" much as he would an excellent teacher. He would try to support them in a way of their choosing and would ask them, "What is it that you would like for yourself?"

A comment provided by one of the interviewees appropriately summarized how principals approach the teacher near to retirement when he eloquently stated," With the one

type of retiree they have to be encouraged to 'stick to the knitting' throughout the months of the last year, yet with the other there has to be no reminding, just excited celebrations heralding the imminent conclusion of a successful career."

The diversity and multiplicity of the actions presented by the respondents in this section reinforce the complexity of the concept of instructional supervision as described in the first section of this chapter. The next section reveals the influences that help to shape the meanings that principals have and actions that principals undertake as instructional supervisors.

What conditions, influences, or factors helped to shape the meanings and actions that you have for instructional supervision?

" It was what I brought with me to the job." This comment is most representative of the responses provided by the interviewees when asked the question above. The principals "brought" attitudes, skills, expectations, experiences, to different contexts and these were the kinds of influences that they felt helped to shape their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors.

Attitudes, Skills, and Experiences

One respondent pointed out that many of the skills that he possessed were a result of his previous experience as a teacher effectiveness consultant but the focus of his conversation was on the importance of having a trusting, supportive attitude towards teachers:

> I brought things with me in terms of attitudes and things with me in terms of skills. The attitudes I had formed over my life I guess, and and the skills probably I had been able to develop in my work as an effective teaching consultant. Because a lot of the work that we were doing is what you would classify as supervision of teachers and feedback about their performance in the classroom. Now, I started off talking about attitudes because I think they're important. I think an attitude that I

> bring supervision is that people want to do the best they possibly can unless there are unusual circumstances. What they need is support to be able to to develop whatever skills that they have. And I guess maybe I can describe this attitude in terms of what it is not. I don't take an attitude into supervision one of that I must monitor very carefully what every teacher is doing. I don't think that that is what supervision is about. I don't believe that teachers are doing things that are negative to the school atmosphere and doing them behind the principal's back. I don't see that kind of thing. I refuse to go through life looking for gremlins in my closet.

Another principal talked about having an empathic attitude towards others: "I guess I've always been a rather empathic person. I've always sort of try and feel what I think other people are feeling." He went on to describe personal experiences that he felt had contributed to the development of his empathic attitude. He related an experience that he had as a high school student with an insensitive teacher who "put him down." He also described a situation in which his son was "turned off reading" in Grade One. Later in the conversation, he talked about how his experience with one of his native students helped him to be more sensitive to the values and views of others. He referred to " those experiences" as the kinds of influences that helped him to form his meanings and actions as an instructional supervisor.

Other respondents talked about their earlier experiences as teachers as having an influence on their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors. One principal in particular talked about his early experiences as a physical education instructor. He saw the gymnasium as being a place where "children not only learn physical skills very well practically, but also social and interpersonal skills practically too." Consequently, as an instructional supervisor, he placed great emphasis on maintaining high standards in the school physical education program because he felt it was a major contributing factor in the establishment of a desirable school climate:

> My position has changed little over time regarding the good influences that the gym is able to exert on all students each day in school with quality daily physical education. It is so important for us to remember however that quality depends so much on what the teacher brings with him/her to class each day. With climate 'in place', students respecting one another, knowing their boundaries, being worked

through 'practical' explanations of expectations, the stage is set for the practitioner to practice those skills for which he/she has been trained.

Another interviewee talked about the travel opportunities that he had when he was a consultant. His travels to other districts allowed him to meet "lighthouse administrators" and conversations with these very successful people helped him to shape his attitude and approaches to change and staff relationships:

> I guess it would be having some very positive experiences with lighthouse administrators. I had an opportunity to do a lot of travelling to other school districts and to look at lighthouse programs in other school districts across Canada and the United States. In speaking with administrators of these schools, each and every one of them have pointed out to me that change will not occur unless you make change. That it is not change that people are most afraid of, it's *changing* that they're afraid of. But that we must continue to look at change as a positive growth process and that, if we spend too much time simply discussing change, whether it be within the specific teacher's classroom or throughout the school, little gets done. And a phrase that sort of puts that all together is that, "after all is said and done, there's usually a lot more said than done." That we must begin to make some change, that in making change, through or within the school, these lighthouse administrators coached me that the biggest problem that I would face would be with staff attitude. That it's not the students that will resist change or parents that will resist change, it's usually staff that will resist change.

A third respondent referred to the experiences that he had as a teacher and the "teaching" that he received from other teachers in his experience as an administrator:

> There have been some in-services certainly that gave opportunity to reflect on what that meant, but I think it's more in terms of the experiences that you have as a teacher and what your own expectations of an administrator would be. The teaching that went on between yourself and the teachers that you're responsible for, because you always learn from them, what their needs are.

Principals also stated that various conferences, inservices, and retreats were the types of experiences that influenced their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors. In particular, four of the principals made mention of the teacher effectiveness inservice program as being very useful. As one of the principals pointed out,

> Well, if you look at the whole teaching effectiveness model, it lets you know the ideal of good instruction and every good teacher exhibits those kinds of things. That's what it was drawn from, so I think as a reflective mirror that the effective teaching model is a very good one. I find I use it unconsciously. It's there. I find myself turning to it when I find a situation that I'm not happy with, that I'm not sure about. I use it as a reflection.

Expectations of Self and Others

Two of the respondents talked about the pragmatic aspect of their job as having an influence on their actions as instructional supervisors. In the first instance, the interviewee focussed on the pressures that he and others place upon him causing him to act and think in certain ways:

> Everyday reality. The pressures. There's always pressures. The pressures put on you, either by yourself or by others, or inferred pressures that you have that others are putting on you, I think, are probably the greatest motivating force for a principal. That's just my own opinion, of course. You know, I have a feeling that my boss wants me to be doing these things and expects me to be doing these things. Therefore, I do them. If I had the feeling that he thought that it wasn't important, I wouldn't be doing them. I'd be occupying my time arranging extra curricular activities or something like that. Who knows? But you have to spend the time. You or somebody else that you've designated has to spend the time.

He continued to discuss priorities that his associate superintendent had for his area and nine priorities that the school board had for the system, and he indicated that he had an obligation to attend to the direction provided by these sources.

In the second instance, the principal talked about having expectations for himself and a concern for fulfilling his function. He would watch and listen to what was going on around him to help him decide on a course of action:

> Well, I guess it's pragmatic. It's what do I have to do to feel that I am fulfilling my function. How do I get through each day and sort of feel, hey, you know, this was okay. It depends on a belief system that I have myself, too, that I have to feel that there's some reason for me being here. I guess I like to think that whoever selected me to come here, had some expectations that they thought I could meet. And therefore I try to balance that, and obviously there are some days when I don't feel that I've met that challenge, too. But I guess that if you if you're in a position like this and you are a people watcher and you're a listener and so on, that you discover a lot of things. And you have to process them and decide which ones are good and which ones should be fostered and nurtured and which ones you can live with. Now and then there are some things that you run into and you say, "This isn't any good; this doesn't work and if I'm going to fulfill my role, I've got to do something about it."

Contexts

Principals recognized that as the context varied so did their actions as instructional supervisors: " The needs of instructional supervision change from school to school, according to the staff that you have, according to the kinds of programs that you run. Each one's different." This quote from one of the respondents was representive of the unique meaning and enactment of instructional supervision for each respondent and situation. The parents, students, staff, and the community all were part of the total school context and exerted an influence on the meanings and actions of the respondents. For example, in one school due to parental input, the instructional emphasis was on curriculum. In another school due to unstable home environments contributing to student discipline problems, there was an emphasis on discipline in-servicing.

One principal emphasized how the "client" can affect how one acts as an instructional supervisor: "You've got to make sure that what's happening in your classrooms, the way that it's programmed, the way it's staffed, the things that are offered, all of those kinds have to be client-based. . . . You have to look at your customers, if you want to say that, or your clients, but you've got to make sure that your client is served."

To summarize, principals described attitudes, skills, experiences, expectations, and contexts as being influences that helped to shape their meaning and enactment of instructional supervision. One principal, however, made the point of emphasizing his independent development as an administrator and what did *not* influence his meanings and actions as an instructional supervisor:

> So, things that have shaped me are the things that were never taught or instructed or given to me as I was developing as an administrator, because there wasn't anything. Anything I've learned in that regard, I've learned by myself.

His response suggested that perhaps there were other aspects that affected the enactment of instructional supervision. Two of these aspects, constraints and enhancers, will be explored in the following section.

Are their conditions that you feel have enhanced or constrained your effectiveness as an instructional supervisor?

When asked this question, principals more readily described the conditions that they felt constrained their effectiveness as instructional supervisors. Very often, the initial identification of the constraints served as a reference point from which they were able to identify the conditions that they felt enhanced their performance as instructional supervisors. For this reason, I have presented both the enhancers and constraints within common categories in the passages that follow.

Time

Overwhelmingly, principals identified "the lack of time" as being a major constraint in relation to their effectiveness as instructional supervisors. One principal indicated, he was aware that " there'll never be enough time to do things, so you shouldn't use that as an excuse" but the constraints of time did place limitations on his involvements in instructional supervision. Principals talked about the many time consuming activities of instructional supervision: observing teachers, planning for professional development, learning new strategies and being aware of new curriculum. However, they also indicated that instructional supervision was just one of their many responsibilities and they identified the magnitude of their job as being a closely related constraint:

> Sometimes it's hard to know where your job starts and where it ends. I mean, I'm a garbage collector, I sweep sidewalks, fix chairs, and all the way to putting band-aids on kids' fingers and stuff. . . . I think the only problem is that I'm not sure I can handle all of these things that an administrator is supposed to handle. It's such a huge job.

Other principals referred to "a lack of control over your agenda" and " a principal's time is not his own." They described meetings, parent requests, and student situations that demanded immediate attention as being in competition for their time:

> You have a list of the kind of things you'd like to do, either written down or in your mind, and you're on deck and you're always called for things. So tasks in terms of instructional leadership that are really important things, sometimes don't get done because of all these other things that have to be attended to. For example, if you have a situation on staff where there's a lot of behavioral difficulties that you have to deal with, that's time consuming and it takes you away from those other instructional duties that are far more important than those ones.

Two principals described the decision-making power afforded them within a school-based budgeting system as being helpful in addressing the many demands on their time. One respondent described the benefits of the choice that school-based budgeting allowed him when deciding what his instructional involvements would be:

> I think when you organize for instruction, the single most important thing that you do to set up the constraints that are on you as a principal for the next year. For example, I could have organized for instruction this year and given myself 4 or 5 classes to teach, easily. However, had I done that, instructional supervision would have suffered. So by making the choice to organize for instruction so that I wasn't involved, or that I had given myself enough time so that I can do those kind of things, then that is the biggest one. But it is something that *I* make a choice on and school-based bugeting gives me that choice.

Four principals described how they forced themselves to make instructional supervision a priority and how this assisted them in addressing the constraints of time:

> You really have to write it on your calendar and make it a priority. All sorts of things would draw on my time. So what I eventually arrived at is with a red pen I would write in the name of the teacher on each day and then these observations were all centered around our discipline, our inservice programs. . . . But I found it very hard to to keep to that time schedule. You just have to make a very, very high priority. It would have been much easier just to let it slide.

> It becomes very time consuming. You don't have time to do everything. Certain things have to be put on hold. And one of the things that was put on hold and I was told that by one of the principals, and I guess I do it now, is some of the paperwork.

> In other words, there has to be a built-in clock in your head that says that every week or every day, or whatever, you're actually going to do that, to make it an important part of your job.

> But still, all those tasks are there and some of them aren't getting done. That's the way it is. It depends on what's available to you, and you have to be able to gauge for yourself what it is you can do and you have to look after yourself, too. Some of us burn ourselves out trying to do the whole thing and it isn't possible. So you do triage, and you try to set those priorities and you're constrained by that.

Isolation

Principals who were the only administators in their schools described their lack of contact with other administrators as being a constraint. One interviewee described not having someone to share his feelings with and the difficulty in finding someone that was empathic to his situation:

> You sink or swim. Especially in the one-administrator school, because you have nobody to talk to. Nobody understands the situation. You can't talk to your staff because I don't think it's professional. And there are certain things you wouldn't want to say. So you just have it all in you mind. If you ask your associate, he doesn't even know your climate and he doesn't really understand either. So it's very difficult in a one-administrator school.

Another principal expressed similar feelings and emphasized the need for having an assistant principal at every school and an adequate level of support staff:

> I think the whole area of assistants has to be looked at in a different way. If it's a training ground, let's make it one. If it's a useful thing to have assistants, let's have one in every school, regardless of whether you're teaching full-time or whatever. Let's have one. . . . It's a lonely sort of alienation but it can certainly be made less by having an assistant to share with. You can certainly share with another principal, but that's not the same. It helps but you need someone on staff that you can turn to. You can't be there every second and so you need someone to turn to on staff who will take that responsibility because a lot of teachers don't want to take it. Or if they take it, they don't really understand what that means. . . . I really think our schools are understaffed at the support level. People keep saying we're top-heavy on the support end. I don't believe we are. I think we need more aides, I think we need more secretarial time, I think we need assistants to be able to do the job well. And I think it would be money well-spent.

The comments of a principal who had two assistant principals reinforced the value of their assistance:

> Having two assistant principals is a tremendous advantage to me. Each of them have their own particular areas. . . . So, from my point of view, it provides me with a tremendous channelling of responsibility and frees me in a lot of ways to get involved in the creative curriculum.

Many principals emphasized that when they did have opportunities to learn and share with others, they found these occasions to be very beneficial. Three principals talked about the value of their participation in an administrators inservice--the Inservice for the Development of Effective Administrators (IDEA). Another principal stated that his participation in the Teacher Effectiveness Program allowed him to "have the words to describe what the teacher's doing." Collegiality was seen as a primary enhancer for another respondent:

> As to something that has assisted me, I guess it has been collegiality. There are mentors galore if you allow yourself to believe that you don't know it all. If somebody has got something that they can help you with or if they can share a new insight, a new idea, their background experience can help you in many ways. I have always appreciated the mentors in my life, and they're there. There are people in this district who have provided support, assistance, that I can bounce things off of, but one can go outside as well. Our district does not exist in an educational vacuum either. That there are so many different programs that we can learn from and I have just found so many people who are willing to spend time with myself, share their ideas, their comments. To me the idea of collegial mentorship has, I think, been the strongest ally that I've had.

The Staff

Aspects involving staff were seen by principals as being either potential enhancements or constraints to their effectiveness as instructional supervisors. The willingness of the teachers to "buy into the mission of the school" was viewed by many principals as being of utmost importance. The adoption of a common school philosphy provided a common focus for all staff members and allowed them to work together in a supportive manner:

> Well, things that help you be an effective supervisor, naturally, are that the staff that adopts the philosophy or mission of the school or indeed a philosophy or mission similar to the one that you've talked about. In other words, making kids feel good about themselves so that you're offering the best curriculum and the best delivery that you can with what you have, and if everybody's headed in that direction, then your job is 10 times easier, absolutely. You have to work with good people. You can't work in a vacuum. So the staffing component is ultra, ultra important.

Principals saw this as being much preferable to a situation in which there was not a shared mission as these situations had great potential for conflict and non-cooperation.

As well principals described healthy principal/ teacher relationships as being invaluable to the enhancement of instructional supervision. One principal stressed the importance of teachers' attitudes toward the principal and saw great benefits result from " the general staff willingness to have me in the classroom." Another respondent described the difficulties resulting from poor communication between principals and their staff: "If the communication lines are not open because you're new in the school or because of lack of trust, then information that should be coming to you doesn't come to you. Or it comes to you at a time when things are already very bad. You see, you're constrained by your own access to information, for one thing." Recognizing the importance of good teacher/ principal relationships, caused principals to work hard to establish these relationships through "supportive listening, by remaining visible and approachable, by attempting to break down barriers and by letting them know that you have feet of clay."

The relationships between staff and students were seen as being potentially enhancing or constraining as well. When discussing the teacher in crisis or the teacher near to retirement who was having difficulties, principals often referred to the teacher's attitude or relationship with the students as being the central to the problem. As one respondent emphasized, "If you don't believe that it's important for you to build a relationship with a kid, and to make him feel good about himself when he's with you, then forget it!"

One principal saw teacher entrenchment on his staff as being a constraint in that it made it more difficult to facilitate change;

> One of the things that I think is standing in my way is just movement of staff. I'm in a school where one, two, three, four of my staff have been here twelve years. It's very hard to facilitate change. . . . This year was the first time I've had a new person on staff, so it's very difficult to work without that change. I would like to see more change--people going to other schools because I think they'd pick up more ideas. So it's professional development for them.

The System

Principals also talked about some of the constraints and enhancers in relation to their school system. For example, one principal noted inconsistencies between what the school board set as priorities and how they enacted these priorities:

> I guess I'd like the system not to be hypocritical, saying that this is what we want and this is what should be happening and on the other hand, saying, "Look at this." For example, it's important that you meet children's needs, they're unique individuals. You program for that so they're learning at their own rate and all of a sudden, "Well, on this achievement test, they only scored 37%." It doesn't fit. And then to say, "Well people, this 37% , this test, is only a very, very small part of this whole measure or assessment of this child, so don't worry about it." But this is what they put into the papers, this is what they bring up at principal meetings. For the small part it's supposed to be, it sure gets a lot of publicity. That bothers me. And that makes it very difficult.

Three principals referred to a lack of training for many of their tasks as instructional supervisors. As one principal stated, "But we certainly do have a direction, or a guideline that we do work with teachers and we are responsible for what's going on in the classrooms and it's up to us to make sure that we are sort of in control of the situation, but I've never been trained by the system to do any of it." He continued to explain that often you learn what to do by just being "immersed" into the role of principal.

Another principal expressed similar feelings in regard to the lack of training for instructional supervisors but implied that the district was now starting to attend to this need:

> The biggest lack, the biggest void, I think, of any principal's education, and I'm only talking personally, is the fact that we were never trained as instructional supervisors. Hell, most of us were never trained as administrators. No, we were never schooled on anything like that and I think administrators, even until ten years ago, would be totally shocked at the things principals have to do and the little time there really is to make sure you've got a program or a curriculum in your school that's applicable to the kids that you have in that community. We've done a dismal job of that; it's only now that we're getting better at it. But as far as things that've shaped me from downtown, it's only in the last two or three years that things are starting to happen downtown that can help you do a better job of making sure that you know what's happening in your school is right.

One principal, in describing a situation in which he felt unsuccessful as an instructional supervisor, talked about his lack of experience as being a constraint. He

recognized that the system should not be accountable for his lack of experience but he did raise the question of why he was placed in a school that was known to be highly political so early in his career:

> In my first full year of being a principal, I was placed in a school that was highly political. I was missing some things that I could have used. Not that anyone could have given me, personally, those things. They come with experience. . . .The questions comes, "Should I have been there?" That was certainly an opportunity and I took it. Things could have happened differently, perhaps if I'd have had some in-service, but I think more than that, more experience. I don't know how you give people the experience of dealing with over-reactive parents, for instance, until you've dealt with them.

The size of the school was recognized as being a constraint by one of the principals. He compared the large size of his present school to smaller schools that he had been principal of in the past and noted that " I don't know the content of all the things that are going on in this school. I think that when I was in smaller schools, I had a better feel for exactly what kids were doing in all the different subjects and I think that I don't have that same feeling here."

The specific kinds of help from the system that one principal referred to as being useful were as previously mentioned, the teacher effectiveness program, the IDEA inservice. He and three other respondents also referred to the value of the in-servicing initiatives that their associate superintendents were taking, although he qualified that he was fortuitous to have the associate that he did:

> The District perspective is an interesting one because the top-down leadership there for instructional supervision is a matter of chance again. Had I not had the associate that I do have, then instructional inservicing wouldn't have happened-the leadership involved in getting me familiar with the new classroom technologies and some of the new learning strategies and those kind of things. Then I wouldn't have been involved with bringing in consultants and transferring that knowledge to my teachers wouldn't have happened. So there's a little bit of chance there and there..and there's got to be good people at the top and I was fortunate. We all know that the people in the associate positions are different. They all have different abilities. So there's a little bit of chance there.

Many of the respondents referred to the availability and excellence of consultants within their system as being extremely beneficial. One interviewee in particular noted his good fortune:

> Mind you, what we do have because we have a large district, is a large consulting services staff and if I need help in any area, I can call and get it. Piece of cake. And we have some experts out there that are expert. I mean, just fantastic people. So you know from the point of view of having the expertise available to us, we're very lucky.

To sum up, principals described numerous enhancers and constraints that influenced their effectiveness as instructional supervisors. They discussed aspects related to the notion of time, the system, the staff, and their own feelings of isolation as principals. In their discussions, while recognizing the positive aspects of the enhancers and negative aspects of the constraints, principals did not seem to be preoccupied with either. They appeared to view them in a realistic manner, accepting them both as unavoidable parts of a greater task.

When do you feel that you have been successful as an instructional supervisor? Not successful?

To answer this question, many interviewees related personal experiences and often their reponses were flavored with emotion. They spoke willingly about their successes as these often rekindled feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment. Their non-successes, however, usually elicited the opposite kinds of feelings reminding them painful experiences that were difficult to forget.

Successes

Two respondents described their successes by referring to instances where they could see that measurable gains had been made. One principal, for example, was disturbed

that according to the results of a school board survey, only 52% of the students in his school found their school work interesting. He drew this to the attention of his staff and they decided to work towards making school interesting for more of their students. Consultants were brought in to assist them in formulating and enacting strategies towards this goal. After three years, considerable gains were made in this area and the principal realized great satisfaction:

> Over a period of three years, that moved from 52% to I believe it was nearly 95%. For myself, there was a feeling of success. That when the students find their work interesting, then the teachers must be doing something right with the students. Over three years, a lot happened. In a student-centered school, the report that they're finding the work interesting, there's no doubt, Les, that I smiled and felt very good as a school principal.

In addition to the improvement of the interest level of students, there was an improvement in the academic performance of the students, as the principal had expected, and he stated, " So that, for myself, was an indication that we were successful."

A second principal experienced feelings of success from the dramatic improvements in the achievement tests of the students in his school, but also described "feeling good about what he saw" in other areas such as a decline in the number of students that "visited" his office:

> When I see the list on the Assistant Principal's door registering seven names as of December, 1988, and comparing this year's list with last year's and seeing the unending list of names of children that "visited" me in my office. I know that if children are not coming to me, not being sent to me by members of staff, then they are in a classroom and they are working. By trusting each and every member of staff to do his and her job in our school, and to end up at the end of last year with the results we achieved on the achievement tests, I know that what we are doing here is working. I visit the classrooms, I walk the corridors, I participate in supervision duties, I teach, I am involved in extra/ co-curricular activities. I feel good about what I see here.

A third respondent pointed out that "we don't set out to measure success objectively and I don't know if we can measure it objectively" and so he talked about the importance of feedback and less formal ways of assessing his success as an instructional supervisor:

> I guess when you receive feedback from your teachers saying that you really helped them with their particular unit of study, or you really helped them with a difficulty in the classroom or you really helped with an interview. So you pretty well have to rely on direct feedback.

He continued to describe how one-on-one interviews and teachers reaching their goals were ways of measuring his success:

> If you've set up particular goals that are within the one-on-one interviews that I have, the teachers have to bring at least two goals that they're working on for the year, so when you have your second one-on-one interview in the springtime, then obviously you're going to discuss those goals and see how well they went. And if 80 or 90% of your teachers are telling you that they're reached their goal, and they're showing you things that, indeed, that they have reached the goals, then that's another way of measuring if you've been successful.

He shared another indicator of whether he was successful or not and that was the ease in which he was able to write the performance review of a teacher. He explained,

> If you find it difficult to write that performance review, then it means you don't know enough about what's going on with that person or in that classroom. If you find it very easy to write that peformance review, then you know that you've probably had some impact or you'd know what is going on in that classroom and hence, you've obviously been successful in making sure that something good is going on in that classroom. You may not have caused it but at least you know what is going on. And I do need feedback.

Another respondent recognized positive feedback from his management group as an indicator of success when he said, "I guess as far as feeling successful in concerned, I feel most successful when the management group which includes the faculty council let's me know that they feel good about the way things are going." He continued to describe a specific situation involving a teacher who was very hesitant to accept a different teaching assignment. He convinced her that she was qualified for the assignment and encouraged her to take it and she later provided him with some very positive feedback:

> She said well, she'd probably have a nervous breakdown, that she felt she wouldn't be able to cope. And I said that I hoped that she would keep me informed just how she's doing because we really felt that it was important for her to try it. Anyway, about a month later, she came to me and said, "I'm feeling good. It's

> much better for me to see fewer kids. I'm knowing them better. It's working out really well." And that's a good feeling.

To other respondents, success was realized through the institution of certain programs. One respondent talked about three very innovative programs that he and his staff had initiated and implemented at his school. What made them successful in his eyes was that they were school-created programs that were better serving the needs of his students. Another respondent described a situation in which the Grade One teacher in his school had a very difficult class, "kids that carried around a lot of extra baggage," and so he got her involved in a discipline pilot project to assist her with the difficult children. He had very strong feelings of success when he and his assistant principal and a consultant appraised the progress of the program and they arrived at similar assessments: " They were all positive and glowing and great!" He was especially pleased for the teacher because of her courage to get involved in the program and that it resulted in a lot of positive feedback being given to her: " That's feedback again and teachers need feedback. I guess I have to keep going back to that. Those kind of things are very, very important and almost never happen in a teaching career. Simply because the teachers don't want to become involved because there's a fear of something happening to them."

One respondent talked about the success of another program but in relation to his own growth as an instructional supervisor. He found that the Teacher Effectiveness Program provided a much better process for conferencing his teachers:

> I've been able to use what I've learned in effective teaching. . . because I knew what I was looking for as far as good qualities, or qualities that a good teacher should exhibit, and so in the conferences I have with teachers, I can be more specific. I can talk about what they're doing knowledgably, rather than just airy-fairy. So I feel successful in that regard, in that I'm giving teachers a better conference and giving teachers a better process for when I come into the classroom.

Another respondent stated that he didn't "see success in large lumps," rather, he described it as a"global thing that happens." To illustrate, he gave the example of arriving at a new school and winning over the staff, parents and students to the point where" there's

respect, reciprocal communication and a sense of cooperation and balance." He described the reason he felt successful was because, "it meant something to the kids too, because when we're operating as a team, we're doing good things for the kids. . . . I had the feeling that as a unit we were together."

Much emotion was evident when two respondents talked about their feelings of success that involved the growth of individual teachers. In the first instance, the principal described the tremendous feeling of satisfaction he had as he watched two of his new teachers grow into outstanding teachers:

> They're both new teachers, great ideas, easy to work with, willing to try things in the classroom that I suggested and they just grew, grew, grew, grew and I think they're way ahead of their time. The one teacher, I think, is maybe the best teacher in our system, if not in the world. I had my son in her classroom, I know things that were done; kids loved learning--they ate it up. So, yeah, those two people and it was just super. I"m really impressed with them. I'm still impressed with them.

In the second instance the principal described a situation involving a relatively inexperienced teacher that initially had serious difficulties. However, over the course of five years she grew into becoming "one of the best teachers on staff." He described her enthusiasm and desire as being essential components in her growth process and although he had feeling of success in regard to her development he also recognized that "I'm not the one that changed. She is. She feels that I had something to do with that and I hope I did, but she's the one that changed" His feelings of success were not restricted to the teacher's instructional growth as there was also a human relationship that developed as well: " I feel really good about our relationship. And I know that she did too. When I left that school, I went to her room particularly and she gave me a big hug and started to cry. It was just a very emotional time for me too."

Non-Success

As one might expect, not all of the experiences that principals had as instructional supervisors could be described as successes. In the passages that follow principals describe occasions where they felt that they were not successful in their instructional supervisory endeavours.

Many of the respondents related having unsuccessful experiences that involved a teacher experiencing difficulty. The principals indicated that handling these sorts of situations was unpleasant for all concerned. They described the challenges involved with the teacher accepting that they might have difficulties, and then working constructively towards improvement. However, what was most disturbing for the respondents was that it was a long process that often was harmful to the students throughout its duration. The concern for the student is illustrated by the comment of one respondent:

> I guess if I was to take a look at negative experiences, it's where you provide all of the resource to the teacher and following a very intensive involvement, they are either not able to or not willing to make change. And then you have to pursue termination. It is not the termination of the teacher that most disappoints me. It's that children had to be put through that process that most disappoints me. That during the year of resource assistance, very intensive assistance, and then the documentation of the results and the time lines and accountability and goal-setting, and then finally to formalizing the evaluation for the process of termination to take place, that throughout that whole process, it is truly the children that are suffering in this and so I've been asked a couple of times, does it upset me when a teacher is terminated? Yes, but not nearly to the extent that it upsets me that a group of children were put through that process for that entire year as well. That bothers me more than anything.

Another respondent expressed similar concerns but emphasized how his efforts were to no avail. He described his involvement as being as positive as possible as he tried to utilize other teachers, consultants, conferencing, and classroom visitations but he indicated that" almost every interaction I can think of between myself and this woman was a conflict and there were no gains anywhere. It's the kind of situation that you lose sleep

over. It leaves a bad taste in your mouth much of the year." He continued to describe what bothered him most about this situation:

> First, I like to think that I can win every body over. I know that's that's Napoleonic and that I cannot. And the second thing that bothers me is that right now, this very minute, there are 24 kids or 25 kids sitting in rows doing worksheets in a phonics book with this teacher when they could have some very very different learning experiences going on for them.

Two respondents described situations in which the teachers having difficulties left teaching in less than desirable fashion and both interviewees regretted that they weren't able to be of more assistance. As one principal relates, not only did he wish he could have done more to help her but he was most disturbed by the manner in which the teacher was treated by the system:

> But anyhow, she was coming along. She was growing. She then went on a sabbatical with the guarantee that she'd come back to the school that she'd left. She was not allowed to do that and I think she eventually quit and I think we drove her out. Not the right way and I felt really bad about that. I think that we did a disservice to our profession. I just didn't feel it was right. As far as I'm concerned, the kids are benefitting but still, that individual, I felt, was really thrown to the dogs, just discarded without much care or thought and I feel our system is large enough that we should be able to take these people and provide them with some dignity on the way out. So that bothered me, it bothers me about the way we treat teachers, but that one, I would say, was the most disappointing. It even bothers me today, and it's been six years. Six or seven. I wasn't even there when she said she couldn't come back. I didn't have any control over it but it still bothers me.

In the second instance the respondent expressed serious regret and a sense of helplessness at not being able to "stem the nervous breakdown" of one of his staff members. He also alludes to the fact that this sort of occurance affects the rest of the staff as well:

> The situation we had early in the year--we had a teacher go off on a stress leave. And it was a situation where the teacher was new to the school. New to that population of students. Of course, I always feel like I would have liked to have been more successful with that person. The person was just an excellent person- an excellent humanist. He just didn't have the skills necessary to work in the inner city and got gobbled up by the kids for what ever reason, and there were a lot of reasons. But the thing that bothers me the most about it, is that I always feel that I

could have stemmed that nervous breakdown or that stress breakdown. Somehow! And I'm not sure how it would have been done, but you always think that there must have been something you could have done. In reality, there probably wasn't because it was a really self-inflicted type of thing. You always feel useless because you don't want that to happen to your staff members. And it's very debilitating for the staff member. And the rest of the staff, too, because they say, "Hey, one of our peers is down." It's just like fighting in a war when one of our guys got shot.

Another respondent talked about his feelings of a non-success involving a teacher in difficulty because it sometimes forced him into "playing games" to get rid of that teacher. He recognized that some ethical issues were present but the limited options available made this action a last resort to serve the needs of the students:

> I've played games to get people out and I don't like it when you cancel a program to get rid of a person. Now I hope I have the integrity to feel that that program really wasn't going anywhere and I've got a couple of programs that I've honestly said, "The teacher is not doing an adequate job, so they're not meeting the needs of those kids and therefore, I'm getting rid of them and the only way I'm going to get rid of them is get rid of the program." Now that's very poor from a union point of view, from everything else, but if I believe in myself as a professional and I feel that's the only way I can improve a situation for my clients, then I'm afraid that I have to do it. I don't feel good about it. I don't feel good about the way that the person feels, it's not a nice feeling to have to be very blunt and let the person know that they really aren't cutting it and that we're not going to continue that program under those circumstances.

One respondent felt unsuccessful when a program that he had aspirations for did not transpire, however, he recognized that the program's success or failure was not always due to his efforts:

> I haven't been successful in that a teacher or teachers did not do the program that I thought should have been done and my example is intramurals. You know you can coax so much, you can lay out things so much, you can suggest so much but when someone always blames the kids, no, you haven't been successful. But then after a while, you realize that it wouldn't have mattered how much you would have done. It's the person's own being that's created the lack of success not how much you might have had to work on it or how much you did work on it. It's the person's own lack of direction that caused the difficulties, not how much direction I tried to give. But yeah, I would have liked that to have been successful, . . .

One principal recalled being assigned to a "highly political" school early in his career and not being able to deflect some of the criticisms of over-reactive parents towards his staff as creating feelings of non-success for himself:

> Well, the political circumstance, I think I could have done a better job of not so much protecting teachers, but maybe deflecting the things that came at them so didn't hurt as much. I like parents to be interested and I think we're dead if they're not, but it can also be very, very destructive if that interest isn't channeled and if they start to take over or they don't get what they want. So they start to chip away. . . .It was a challenge and I don't think I hurt anything and maybe I helped a few things. I just don't have a sense of final success with this thing and then on to the next, and I don't think you always get that. I just have a sort of vague sense of a few things that I'd have liked to have seen happen a lot differently than they did.

In conclusion, principals shared personal experiences, each having unique circumstances, to describe their successes and non-successes. Discussions included the topics of measurable results, programs, evaluation, feedback, but most predominantly growth or non-growth of students and staff. Their recollections elicted a range of feelings, from pride and accomplishment to regret and disappointment and reinforced the "human aspect" of instructional supervision.

Summary

In this chapter, the data provided by the eight respondents represented a very full and rich understanding of the notion of instructional supervision. Student learning, pedagogic interaction, human relationships, curriculum, philosophy, vision, and meeting student needs were mentioned when principals described what instructional supervision meant to them. As well, they described numerous actions as instructional supervisors: observing and being observed, clarifying goals and expectations, facilitating teachers and instruction, planning and organizing, and working with others. Principals saw their personal experiences, interaction with others, and in-service activities as being influential towards shaping their meaning of instructional supervision. Time, isolation, staff and the system were discussed as either enhancing and/or constraining their effectiveness as instructional supervisors. The chapter concluded with an analysis of the successes and non-successes of principals as instructional supervisors. Principals addressed this question by centering their discussions around the aspect of growth--of self, program, student,

and/or staff. In the chapter that follows, the themes that were embedded in the data will be identified to provide further insight and understanding in regard to the meanings and actions of principals as instructional supervisors.

CHAPTER 5

THEMES DERIVED FROM THE DATA

Introduction

Van Manen (1984) views themes as being like "knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus experienced as meaningful wholes. Themes are the stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. It is by the light of these themes that we can navigate and explore such universes" (p. 59).

The intent of this chapter is to highlight the themes that emerged from the data provided by the eight principals in this study.

Philosophy--a Foundation for the Meanings and Actions of Principals as Instructional Supervisors.

A predominant theme which emerged from the data was that the respondents possessed a set of beliefs and values that was inextricably interwoven amongst their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors. The personal philosophies of the respondents served as a basis from which their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors emanated. The philosophical foundations of principals became apparent when respondents talked about directly sharing their beliefs, values, and expectations as a starting point in the process of instructional supervision. As one principal stressed, "We began as a staff, right from the very beginning, to adopt a statement of beliefs. I did not even want

to start off the school year without the adoption of a statement of beliefs, in that I believe that schools must be student-centered." Another principal specifically referred to his "philosophical approach" numerous times throughout the interview.

Other respondents demonstrated the existence of a personal philosophy in less direct ways, as they often prefaced their responses to various questions with the two very important words, " I believe." For example, the importance that one principal held for the value of being honest with his staff was evident when he said, " To assist in creating comfort for teachers there must be no hidden agendas, no surprises. Regarding no surprises, I believe that everyone on staff should know exactly what is required of them and each other."

The meanings and actions that principals described revealed beliefs and values related to such aspects as leadership, human relations, teaching, curriculum, the purpose of education, and how students learn. When the belief systems were considered in their entirety, no two respondents held a set of beliefs that was exactly alike. However, there was one core value that pervaded the all aspects of the notion of supervision and seemed to underlie all of the respondents philosophical perpectives-- serving the needs of the students. This responsibility will be discussed in the following passages as the next theme.

Responsibility for Serving The Needs of the Student--A Critical Source

The general notion of responsibility was strongly evident when principals discussed the concept of instructional supervision, but all of the principals alluded specifically to their responsibility to serve the needs of their students as being of utmost importance. In relation to the previously discussed theme, it was a core value that was common to the philosophies of all of the principals. This responsibility seemed to

outweigh all of the others and served as a critical source from which principals' meanings and actions evolved.

In describing their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors, on numerous occasions principals made reference to the aspect of addressing the needs of the students as being a critical factor in making their decisions about what course of action should be taken. This was especially apparent when principals had to make decisions involving teachers in difficulty. One principal emphasized the importance of serving the needs of the student when he described having to confront a teacher that was having severe difficulties:

> The bottom line that I had to make known to the teacher . . . was that I did not believe that the kids were getting a qualitatively supportive program. The children deserved more. To make a long story short, this teacher served her last two years as an additional librarian to that particular school. . . . In fact, we can not afford *not* to do anything about a situation like that because it's the children who we've got to be concerned about.

The comments of another principal reinforced the idea that his feelings of responsibility provided the impetus for making uncomfortable decisions involving teachers in severe difficulty, causing him to "don the black hat.":

> But when they are in severe difficulty, I think it's the principal's responsibility to do something about it. . . . It's a very uncomfortable thing to do. But, I think it needs to be done. And at that time, I think you become the person who is wearing the black hat or a person perceived to be wearing the black hat.

Not only did the sense of responsibility that principals had for the student motivate their decisions about teachers in difficulty, but it helped them to realize feelings of success and to recognize the excellent teacher. Principals referred to the excellent teacher as being a person who characteristically attended to the needs of the student. When describing his feelings of success and one of the "best teachers in the world" one respondent stressed,

> I know that things were done; the kids loved learning-- they ate it up. It was kids, kids, kids, kids and what can we do for them! But her kids are learning, her parents are happy, the kids are happy, she's happy.

Concern for the needs of the student was not restricted to being influential in making personnel decisions. It affected other areas as well such as budget, program, organizational, curricular, and professional development decisions. One respondent addressed three of these areas when he was describing his meaning of instructional supervision:

> You have to put your money where your mouth is. Are we into this for education of the kids or are we in it for a new Xerox machine? . . . . I mean you've got to decide, hey, am I going to have a primary opportunity class, am I going to have split grades, are we going to have separate entities, are we going to have an academic challenge program, or in fact are we going to send those kids to District Centre? All of those organizational things have to do with instructional supervision because you have to look down the road and say, "How's this going to affect the classroom?"

In addition, many of the respondents related instances where they were involved in emphasizing and supporting certain curricular and/or professional development initiatives to best meet the needs of the students in their schools. After describing three unique school-initiated programs one principal stated,

> And you have to look at the kid, you have to look at his needs, and then you have to try to, together, develop things that are going to help him move the same way that you want every kid to move. You want them to become independent, you want them to become productive, you want them to be happy.

Other principals described various professional development activities undertaken at their schools to meet the needs of their students--behavioural, curricular, social, and cultural.

The principals' responsibility to meet the needs of their students pervaded their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors. It was a core value within their personal philosophies and and was manifested by their actions as instructional supervisors. Acceptance of this responsibility affected principals' decisions and actions regarding staff, budget, organization, programs and professional development. In other words, this responsibility can be seen as a prime motivating force for the actions of principals as instructional supervisors.

The Notion of Growth--A Primary Goal of Instructional Supervisors

Implicit in the primary responsibility of meeting the students needs was an underlying goal of these principals as instructional supervisors--that of having their students demonstrate some form of growth. The data provided by the respondents were replete with reference to this notion, and a variety of interpretations were offered: It was seen in terms of academic, psychological, social, behavioural, cognitive, or physical growth. As well, where growth was seen to occur, it often was linked to the instructional supervisor having feelings of success. When talking about feeling successful, one principal referred to positive growth in the attitudes of his students towards school: "Over a period of three years it moved from a 52% to I believe it was nearly 95%. For myself there was a feeling of success." Another principal described his feelings of success in terms of the behavioural growth exhibited by his students, while other principals referred to feeling successful when their students had shown demonstrated growth on their achievement tests.

The notion of growth was not exclusive to students. As evidenced by their actions and interactions with teachers, principals also revealed growth of teachers as being a goal as well. One principal exemplied this point when he talked about linking student growth to the personal growth of his teachers:

> So in meeting with the teachers, I ask and request for them to come up with at least one personal goal that would look at growth in regards to student centeredness. . . . I, as a school principal, may also request one school goal of them, which I shared with them in terms of growth. It has to do with growth.

Another principal when describing his successes, emphasized the growth of two of his new teachers: " They're both new teachers, great ideas, easy to work with, willing to try things

in the classroom that I suggested and they just grew, grew, grew, and I think were way ahead of their time."

Principals talked about growth as being a possible goal for all teachers regardless of their abilities or years of experience. When discussing how they would supervise the new, retiring, excellent teachers or the teacher experiencing difficulty, their actions may have differed but the expectation of growth was always present. The comments of one principal typify this expectation:

> Staff have to understand that their capacities are not finite. . . . I do honestly believe that the capacity of human resilience and resourcefulness is such that we can always do a little better, go a little further, even though it may be felt that the end of the road has been reached today. Humans can often be the catalyst in altering these perceptions.

Lastly, principals also recognized growth in themselves as being an important facet of instructional supervision. Throughout our discussions, they recognized the importance of trying to stay current, the value of professional development, and of learning from past experiences.

Teacher/Principal Relationships--A Vital Component

Another dominant theme that emerged from the descriptive data was the importance of relationships between the teacher and the principal. Subsumed within this theme were other subthemes such as permitting access, attitudes, trust, collaboration, and empowerment.

The importance of teacher/principal relationships became especially evident when principals talked about their feelings of success and non-success as instructional supervisors. As pointed out in the data analysis, many of their feelings of non-success involved a teacher having difficulties, and principals cited a lack of receptivity in which the

teacher would not "permit access" to be helped. This resistant attitude of the teacher was seen as being a major source of frustration for the principals and often was the key determinant of feelings of success or non-success. One principal described this resistant attitude when he spoke of his feelings of futility when he attempted to help a teacher experiencing difficulties. In this situation, the teacher did not permit access to anybody:

> She became upset when I wanted to come into her room to assist in any way. I met with her and I told her that I saw some problems that needed to be addressed for the good of the kids. I wasn't the person to help her at that time because she resented my involvement to that point. She felt that I was accusing her of something so at that time I arranged that she work with one of our consultants in the behaviour disorders program. This poor consultant--a good, good, woman. This teacher kept undermining everything that she tried to do. . . . I could not touch base with this woman on any issue and we had bad feelings toward each other the entire time.

Embedded within this example is the notion of trust, and many of the respondents identified the importance of establishing a trusting relationship with their teachers. The comments of one principal reinforced the idea of trust as being a catalyst for building healthier principal/teacher relationships and he discussed the additional notions of consistency and integrity:

> There is an opportunity to change peoples' attitudes towards supervision simply by letting time build a healthier relationship between the supervisor and the person being supervised. Trust is probably the key idea. I don't know of any other way to develop trust other than to show over a long period of time that what you say is what you mean and what you do so that people are continually getting congruent messages. Show that you respect the people that you work with. I think that trust is far more easily broken than it is built. . . . I think trust is an important part of the supervisory relationship and it's one that you have to be very very, careful with. And I think the key is integrity. You know, if you're open and you're honest, you don't play games with people, they start to recognize that.

Many of the actions of principals were directed towards building a trusting, productive relationship with teachers. In many instances, the initial action toward building this type of relationship was to show a basic trust in teachers. As one principal stressed,

> I don't take an attitude into supervision that I must monitor very carefully what every teacher is doing. I don't think that is what supervision is about. I don't

> believe that teachers are doing things that are negative to the school atmosphere and doing them behind the principal's back.

Another principal also demonstrated a similar confidence in teachers and recognized the advantage of working with the teacher in a positive way initially:

> You've got to be careful. I've found that out because if they feel that you're negative or any way criticizing, you just build a wall and then there is no instructional supervision because you're not going to be able to work with that individual. It just doesn't come about . . . . You've got to be very positive and work with the individual and go from where they're at. Unless the teacher is a very "bad" teacher, then you have to really do something. But most teachers are pretty good.

Other actions taken by principals also reflected the importance of establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with teachers. Principals provided numerous examples of collaborative involvement (ie. school mission statements, professional development, curriculum) and delegation of responsibility and power to the teachers. Principals recognized the strengths of their teachers and their own limitations. For example, principals talked about the difficulties of trying to know all of the curriculum for all of the grades. One respondent most emphatically pointed out, "Anyone that thinks that they are the curricular leader in every area, for every little piece in the school, is going to drive themselves nuts. . . . The teacher is the curriculum expert!" Another principal described the importance of letting his staff know that he wasn't perfect and that he had "feet of clay like they do." These examples were illustrative of the kinds of actions that empowered teachers, let them know that they were important, showed a respect for people, and as a result built healthier teacher/ principal relationships.

Instructional Supervision--An Affective Activity

The previous discussion of teacher/principal relationships alluded to the next theme that emerged from the data: instructional supervision was much more than just a set of mechanical tasks to be carried out in a perfunctory manner. Instructional supervision was described as being a human activity that involved interactions between many different groups--principals, teachers, students, parents, community members and superordinates. Embedded in the interactions described by the principals were many references to feelings of emotion, thus highlighting the affective nature of instructional supervision.

Throughout our discussions, principals expressed a wide range of emotions. They shared feelings of pride and satisfaction when talking about their successes-- growth in students, teachers or themselves. Conversely, there were feeling of dissatisfaction, regret and sorrow when they shared their non-successes. The teacher experiencing difficulties was the most evocative situation. Principals described the teachers as feeling threatened and having feelings of regret and discomfort within themselves that "still bothered them" years later. Principals' actions as instructional supervisors involved the notion of risk, thus creating anxiety for the supervisor and/or the supervised and even for those who weren't experiencing difficulty. One respondent was encouraging peer intervisitations at his school and felt that the reluctance of his staff to embrace this initiative was due to " a fear of something. . . a fear of failure or because they don't feel adequate to start with."

Four of the respondents talked about "gut feelings" that they had about teachers, lessons that they had observed, or about their own performance. When describing his sense that something was wrong, one interviewee said,

> You know when you walk by and you get that gut feeling. That "grrrrr". You know the kind. I know I haven't done what I should have done. Whether it's their fault, my fault, or whoever's fault, I just know. I have that sort of gut feeling. . . . that tightening of the muscles in your stomach.

Clearly, instructional supervision was not a process that was void of affective feelings. It was a process that involved many different people in many different contexts, occasions of agreement/disagreement, compatibility/incompatibility, and success/non-success. By its nature, it was an activity that was imbued with emotion.

Instructional Supervision--An Open, Dynamic, Adaptive Process

Having discussed a set of beliefs that principals hold and the notions of responsibility and goals that are implicit in their beliefs, the possibility exists for supervision to be viewed and enacted as a closed, directive process. However, the data provided by the respondents in this study suggested that quite the opposite was true. Rather than seeing the process as being fixed or closed, the principals in this study were cognizant of the dynamic nature of the process and the flexibility, adaptability, and careful balancing that was required on their behalf. Although their core values such as the welfare of the student seemed to be firmly rooted and not available for compromise, principals afforded many opportunities for the involvement of others even if it meant delaying or altering an idea of theirs. One respondent was illustrative of the flexibility and openess required when he recognized his limitations and the valuable contributions that his teachers could make:

> And there were other things about the place that I thought I couldn't live with and things that they knew alot more about than I did and I had to defer to their judgement. And I had to wait for some changes too. I recognized that some things were going to have to change, and I couldn't change them right then. I do believe that I don't have all the answers and that three people with experience are going to have a better answer than I would have.

The comments of another interviewee were supportive the notion of openness when he said, "Instructional supervision means anything that has an impact on student learning. . . . So you've got to be fairly open when it comes to instructional supervision. Your way isn't

the only way." Principals recognized the contributions of others as being important within the process as well: students, parents, consultants, specialists, and other central office personnel.

The multiple and varied actions of principals as instructional supervisors involving different actors and contexts were also representative of their flexibility and adaptability. This was especially evident when principals described their differing approaches taken with teachers of various ages and abilities (ie., the excellent teacher in contrast with the teacher in difficulty). In addition, one interviewee highlighted the contextual and staff variability in relation to differing needs of instructional supervision when he said, "the needs of instructional supervision change from school to school, according to the staff that you have, according to the programs that you run--each one's different."

The responses of principals were also suggestive that the process of instructional supervision was integrated as part of a greater meaningful whole and that instructional supervision wasn't their exclusive domain. As one respondent stated, "Instructional supervision isn't something that exists by itself." It was not viewed as being an isolated construct floating in a vacuum but was seen to be interwoven as part of something greater. A specific description of the "greater something" was somewhat elusive but principals made reference to its existence in a variety of ways. One respondent alluded to a "presence" when he talked about his limited ability to be in all classrooms, all of the time: "Obviously the things that are going to happen in the classroom on a day to day basis, I'm going to have very little control over. I've always known that once that classroom door closes in a big school, in particular, that there has to be an impact or an emotional presence or something."

Another principal's comments in regard to school environment were suggestive of the constituent nature of instructional supervision : "If I create for them a good

environment in which to teach in our school, then they are going to require still great support but less instructional supervision." He later talked about the notions of school climate and remaining "true and honest to our school culture."

After sharing his understanding of instructional supervision, one respondent alluded to the notion of instructional supervision "fitting in" a larger context when he stated that "all that is instructional supervision, but if it doesn't fit into a larger context of what's going on in a school. Then it's missing something."

Whether that "greater something" is viewed in terms of a presence, climate, culture, or context, the comments of the principals reflected an awareness that the boundaries of instructional supervision extend beyond themselves and reinforce the openess of the process.

To conclude, this theme, which addresses the open, dynamic nature of the concept of instructional supervision, is perhaps representative of one of the "knots around which we build meaningful wholes" to which van Manen referred. When we view instructional supervision in this way, as the data suggested that the respondents did, then we are better able to understand the diverse and manifold meanings and actions of principals as instructional supervisors and appreciate its integrative nature and complexity.

Summary

A number of themes emerged from the data provided by the principals in this study. A predominant theme was that principals had personal philosophies from which their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors emanated. Closely related to this theme were two other themes regarding the responsibility that principals assumed for meeting the needs of their students and the pervasive notion of growth. The fourth theme highlighted the importance of the teacher/principal relationships in the process of instructional supervision and led to the identification of a fifth theme: instructional supervision is an

affective activity. The final theme, which views instructional supervision as an open, dynamic, adaptive process incorporates the manifold and diverse meanings and actions manifested by principals and addresses the complexity and integrative nature of the concept.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This concluding chapter consists of four sections. The first section restates the purpose of the study and reviews the research methodology. A summary of the major findings and themes are highlighted in the second section. In the third section, personal reflections in light of the research are presented, while the final section discusses several implications for practice and future research in relation to the principal as an instructional supervisor.

Summary

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore the meanings that principals had for the notion of instructional supervision and to discover how they enacted their role as instructional supervisors. The study specifically addressed the following questions:

1. What meanings do principals have for the notion of instructional supervision?
2. What do principals as instructional supervisors do to enact the meanings that they hold for instructional supervision?
3. What influences help to shape the meanings and actions that principals demonstrate in their instructional supervisory role?
4. What conditions enhance or constrain the effectiveness of principals as instructional supervisors.

5. In what circumstances do principals perceive themselves as being most successful as instructional supervisors? Least successful?

Research Design

The research was designed to explore the meanings and actions of principals as instructional supervisors. As this was a naturalistic study, the design emerged as the study proceeded, rather than having a preordinate design with an explicit hypothesis. The study was guided by questions related to the problem statement and insights emerged and meanings developed as data were gathered.

Data were collected over a two month period primarily through the use of extensive semi-structured interviews with eight principals at various levels of schools (ranging from elementary to high school). An informal approach to the interview process utilizing open-ended guide questions resulted in free-flowing discussion and more fully developed responses. In addition to the interview data, tacit knowledge was gained from my observations during the interviews and from my observations and interactions with others as I toured the school. Principals also provided referential adequacy materials (school handbooks, policy statements, professional development plans) to complement their responses.

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcripts were returned to the respondents for their perusal and to allow for any modifications that they felt might be necessary. By writing questions in the margins and at the end of the transcript, I attempted to extend and clarify the data. As well, included with the transcripts was a package of selected readings on instructional supervision in response to the principals' expressed interest in the topic. Follow-up contact was made by phone and/or an interview to allow the participants the opportunity to answer the additional questions and elaborate on their responses.

Data analysis was ongoing from the time of the initial telephone contact with the respondents. The data gathered from the interview transcripts, journal notations, observations, and referential adequacy materials provided a wealth of information which was submitted to repeated readings as part of a content analysis. The research questions formed an organizational framework within which the information was categorized. From this reconstruction of the data themes emerged and were identified to provide further insight and reflection into the data being described.

A summary of the data analysis along with an outline of the themes identified (see Appendix A) were then forwarded to all of the respondents. The intent of this communication was to respond to their expressed interest in the findings of the study, and to enhance the trustworthiness of the data by asking for their appraisal of the data analysis and corresponding themes. Principals provided positive confirmation in regard to the findings of the study, and also used this opportunity to discuss aspects that were of interest to them.

Summary of the Major Findings from the Data

Initially, the topic of instructional supervision was not easily portrayed in words by the respondents. However, during the course of our discussions as the eight respondents reflected upon their actions and personal experiences, the data compiled in a cumulative manner and comprehensive understandings of the notion emerged.

There was not a particular definition of instructional supervision presented that all respondents agreed upon, but rather each of the respondents offered their understanding of the concept based on their own experiences. Many principals stressed that the student formed the core of their understanding of the term and they talked about meeting the students' needs and the notion of student-centeredness. Their beliefs about the student

often formed a philosophical foundation from which a vision evolved. Instructional supervision was not exclusive to the principal but included many other significant players as well: teachers, students, parents, consultants, specialists and senior administrators. The meaning of instructional supervision also included the notion of relationships between principal and teacher and between teacher and student. Within these relationships, the concepts of trust, honesty, respect, support, and reinforcement were presented. Respondents described the act of teaching and teacher growth as being essential parts of their understanding of the concept and professional development plans and activities were undertaken to encourage improved teaching and individual teacher growth. As well, principals included the task of fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum mandate in their meaning of instructional supervision. All of the respondents emphasized the importance of instructional supervision and some referred to it as being synonomous with their role as principal. One principal captured the all-inclusive aspect of instructional supervision when he described it as being "anything that has an impact on student learning."

Principals described manifold and diverse actions as instructional supervisors, and their descriptions served to reinforce the complexity and magnitude of the concept. They described observing teachers and the teaching act in formal and informal ways as being a primary activity. At the same time, they recognized the importance of being observed themselves; being seen as appropriate models or being visible around the school. Principals also felt that clarifying goals and letting people know of their expectations were very important activities that helped teachers to focus their efforts. Another major activity undertaken by principals was that of facilitating teachers and instruction. This included such actions as providing psychological and resource support and creating conducive teaching/learning environments. Respondents indicated that instructional supervision did not just happen. It involved planning and organization and these were two other activities

that principals demonstrated. Lastly, principals made efforts to encourage the involvement of others. They would delegate some of their responsibilities to others, encourage teachers to attend inservices, access consultants and specialists, provide growth opportunities for teachers, and make efforts to involve parents, the greater community and the support staff. Their descriptions of how they acted with teachers in crisis and beginning, excellent, and retiring teachers represented more specific actions related to each corresponding situation.

Principals presented many influences that helped to shape their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors. They talked about attitudes and skills that had been developed from previous experiences as being aspects that they "brought to the job." The expectations that others had of them and the expectations that they had for themselves also affected how they acted as instructional supervisors. Additionally, principals indicated that no two contexts were exactly the same and that different contexts required interpretations and actions that were unique to the particular situation.

Principals recognized that constraints and enhancers could influence their effectiveness as instructional supervisors and were a natural part of their job. They identified lack of time, a sense of isolation, staff relationships, a lack of a common focus, and constraints of the district (ie. placement, lack of training opportunities, inconsistent actions) as factors that affected their performance as instructional supervisors in a negative way. In a similar fashion, they identified factors that addressed the perceived constraints as being enhancers of their effectiveness as instructional supervisors: school-based budgeting, the staff "buying into" the mission, positive staff relationships, system in-services, opportunities for sharing, assistant principals, and additional support staff.

To conclude, principals shared personal experiences to illustrate when they felt successful as instructional supervisors and when they did not . Measurable results, growth or non-growth of students and teachers, and programs were all mentioned when principals

related their successes and non-successes. Their discussions in relation to their feelings of success or non-success incorporated many of the aspects from previous questions, and revealed the affective element of instructional supervision.

Summary of the Themes

Embedded in the data gathered from the eight principals in this study, were several themes relating to their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors. The descriptive data indicated that principals possessed beliefs and values that formed a philosophical foundation from which their meanings and actions emanated. Their responsibility for meeting the needs of their students was a core value within all of the respondents' belief systems and provided the impetus for their actions as instructional supervisors.

Additionally, all of the respondents alluded to the notion of growth as being a desired objective within the process of instructional supervision, and they referred to its occurrence in various forms: academic, social, psychological, behavioural, cognitive, and physical. Growth was described as being important not only in terms of the student, but also in terms of the teacher and the principals themselves.

The relationship between the principal and the teacher was seen by all of the respondents as being a critical component in the process. The interview data indicated that often this relationship was the determining factor as to whether principals realized success or not. Subsumed within this theme were the subthemes of permitting access, trust, attitude, collaboration and empowerment. Implicit in this theme as well was the notion that because instructional supervision was a process that involved a great deal of human interaction, it was more than a mechanistic set of tasks and behaviours; it was an affective activity. This was revealed by the wide range of emotion that pervaded our discussions, and was especially evident when principals discussed their successes and non-successes.

Lastly, many of the themes coalesced to suggest that instructional supervision was an open, dynamic process that required the principals to be flexible and adaptable. Viewing the concept of instructional supervision in this way, allows one to understand the multiplicity of meanings and actions manifested by principals as instructional supervisors and gain a better sense of its complexity and integrative nature.

Personal Reflections

On the Literature

When reflecting upon the literature in relation to the findings of this study, it was apparent that both congruencies and discrepancies existed. The complexity, magnitude, diversity of interpretation, and evolutionary nature of the notion of instructional supervision described in the review of the literature were reinforced by the findings of this study. The descriptive data provided by the respondents were representative of the movement away from authoritarian supervision and towards the collaborative, facilitative, growth-centered type of supervision alluded to by many of the researchers (Marks, Stoops, & King-Stoops,1985; Doll,1983; Glickman, 1985; Oliva,1984; Sergiovanni & Starratt,1983; Sergiovanni,1987; Lewis Jr., 1987). As well, the findings of this study were supportive of the idea that the underlying goals of instructional supervision were to enhance both student growth as described by Alfonso, Firth, and Neville (1981), Harris (1985), Pfeiffer and Dunlap (1982), and Albrecht (1988) and teacher growth emphasized in the writings of Doll (1983) , Oliva (1984), Sergiovanni (1987), and Rallis (1988).

However, not all of the views of instructional supervision were consistent with the descriptive data of this study. The most salient example was Alfonso, Firth, & Neville's (1981) view that supervision was a "set of appropriate behaviors" that can be "identified

and analyzed" with the focus on "supervision not the supervisor." They also envisioned instructional supervision as being " behaviour officially designated by the organization that directly affected teacher behaviour." Both of these views seemed to be lacking in light of the information provided by the respondents in this study. The descriptive data indicated that supervision and the supervisor should not be viewed in an estranged sense. As one respondent emphasized, "Instructional supervision is the principal." While the principals in this study may have described observable behaviours (actions) of instructional supervisors, they were viewed as being one of many components that melded together to form a highly complex integrated whole. Principals described instructional supervision as involving values and beliefs that they and many others held. Principals' actions emanated from their beliefs in combination with the beliefs of others relative to various contexts and were not "designated by the organization" as Alfonso, Firth and Neville suggest. More recent research by Joyce and Showers (1988), Albrecht (1988), Nickerson and Mook (1988), Rallis (1988), and Flath (1989) addressed the importance of the involvement of teachers, community, district administration, and students in instructional supervision and Greenfield (1987) recognized schools as a being "complex and contextually embedded organizations."

Additionally, the actions of the principals in this study were more representative of "the subtle and routine acts" described by Dwyer (1984) and the reflective practice proposed by Sergiovanni (1987) in which he suggested that different practices should be used to accommodate different needs of the teachers within different contexts.

The findings of this study were also supportive of the importance of teacher/ principals relationships as emphasized by Wiles and Bondi (1986) and Blumberg (1980). However, contrary to Blumberg's proposition of teacher/principal relationships being analagous to a "cold war," principals viewed their relationships with teachers as being very positive in the great majority of cases. The "cold war" analogy applied to a few instances

where principals described their interaction with teachers who were encountering difficulties and were not receptive to help. The positive teacher/ principal relationships described in this study were more consistent with the research of Wacowich (1983) and Babiuk (1987) and the ideal approach proposed by Glickman (1985); the approach of moving away from a directive supervision toward collaborative and non-directive supervision.

Lastly, one area that appeared to be only touched upon in the literature was the aspect of the principal possessing and developing a personal philosophy as a foundation for their actions. Glickman (1985) referred to this aspect in only a general way when he described three broad philosophical approaches and Sergiovanni (1987) alluded to teachers having goals and schools having purposes and educational and management platforms. Pfeiffer and Dunlap (1982) suggested that the supervisory prerequisite of a strong self-concept was important, but overall the literature seemed to be remarkably jejune in this regard. In contrast, the descriptive data of this study suggested that the philosophical aspect was one component of instructional supervision that should not be overlooked. The principals' philosophical beliefs in this study pervaded all aspects of instructional supervision as they provided direction and impetus for their actions as instructional supervisors.

The Principal as an Instructional Supervisor--A High-wire Performer

By relating their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, principals not only contributed to a better understanding of the notion of instructional supervision, but they also provided a phenomenological view of how they experienced their role as instructional supervisors. The analogy of the principal as a high wire performer is useful in highlighting many of the important aspects of what this experience was like for them.

The comparision begins by first looking at the primary purpose of both the principal and the performer. Inherent in both roles, there exists an obligation, or sense of responsibility to a particular group of people. While high-wire performers attempt to meet the entertainment needs of their paying customers, principals in this study emphasized their responsibility to meet the educational needs of their students.

Recognizing the apparent danger in proceeding too quickly, principals, similar to acrobats, attempted to establish firm footing before undertaking their tasks. In this light, the "firm footing" for principals was reflected in their efforts to establish a common mission to which staff members would subscribe and in their attempts to establish trusting relationships with their staffs in the initial stages of the process of instructional supervision. Principals indicated that failure to establish firm footing early in the process enhanced the potential for a "fall" which in turn could lead to a difficult recovery. As one respondent pointed out," Trust is more easily broken than it is built. . . . and it will take a lot to overcome that."

The remainder of their task and the accompanying risk was still before them and so they proceeded with caution, advancing step by step. Excellent balance was required throughout the process and while acrobats themselves possess many valuable skills, they rely as well on a balancing pole to enhance a safe passage. Similarly, the principals possessed ideas, skills and beliefs and as well needed to carry their balancing poles--the skills, beliefs, and attitudes of others within varying contexts--to assist them with their task. As they proceeded with their respective tasks, these principals struggled to maintain harmony between themselves and their "balancing poles," there were occasions of precarious imbalance. However, as the acrobat often does, the principals would refocus on their desired end and this would provide them with the impetus for recovery and restoration of their performance.

Reaching their desired end brought feelings of satisfaction and success to both the performer and the principal and their audiences. Conversely, failure to reach the desired end aroused feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration. However, neither result automatically signalled an end to their activities. New audiences and contexts required different performances or refinements to their present act.

The metaphoric view of the principal as a high wire performer contributes to a better understanding of how a principal experiences his role as an instructional supervisor. In their attempts to meet the needs of their audience, the high-wire artist experiences feelings of risk, tension, caution, uncertainty, and satisfaction or dissatisfaction. They must rely on their own skills and assistance from their balancing poles in their attempt to succeed in their balancing act. In similar ways, principals experience their roles as instructional supervisors.

In Search of the Elusive Term

In retrospect, one of the difficulties in exploring the notion of instructional supervision was with the term itself. Use of these two words somewhat limited the interpretation of the concept. The term instructional supervision connotes directiveness and control. While these can be constituent elements of the total process, they only partially capture the concept in its entirety. Different terms such as developmental supervision, reflective supervision, instructional management or instructional leadership have been used as well in an attempt to describe the notion but these too fall short.

From the descriptive data provided by the respondents in this study, instructional supervision involved notions of facilitation, philosophy, leadership, reflection, direction, organization, development, collaboration, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The numerous notions related to the concept of instructional supervision exemplify the difficulty of finding a word or phrase that encapsulates all of these aspects.

The inadequacy of the term was also demonstrated when respondents struggled in their initial efforts to provide their meaning for instructional supervision even though it was clearly evident that they all had very comprehensive understanding of the concept. It was as though principals had to remove themselves from being entrapped by the label and then reflect on what they did to meet the needs of their students in order to extricate the meaning for themselves. I wonder if I would have had very similar data result if I had initiated my study with the question, " How do you meet the educational needs of your students?" Unpretentiously, I admit that finding the words that appropriately capture the true nature of the concept eludes me as well and so the search continues.

The Student--A Silent Partner

I will conclude my reflections by raising what I feel is a very important issue--that of the student in the process of instructional supervision. All of the principals in this study recognized that meeting the needs of their students was their prime responsibility as instructional supervisors. Paradoxically, although meeting student needs was of the utmost importance, the students were the most inactive participants in the process. Principals described a high degree of interaction with the teachers and significant interaction with parents, community, consultants, specialist, and senior administrators but very little direct involvement with the students. Harris (1985) alluded to this occurence when he described supervision as a functional area that is only remotely pupil-related. The question arises then, would the process of instructional supervision better achieve its primary objective of meeting the needs of the students by more actively involving the students in the process? I think so. Regular meetings with student representatives and student questionnaires on relevant instructional topics are two suggested ways of involving students. Student concerns and suggestions could be heard and acted upon, and students would hopefully begin to realize their potential as valuable contributors in the process.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

With reference to the literature on instructional supervision and the principal's role as an instructional supervisor, and in light of the data provided by the respondents in this study, certain recommendations might be considered. The following section suggests some implications for practice and future research in relation to the principal and instructional supervision.

For Practice

It was apparent from the descriptive data provided in this study that principals possessed strong beliefs which provided a foundation for many of their actions as instructional supervisors. The implication that arises from this insight is that principals should take time for reflection to develop their beliefs in regard to such areas as the purpose of education, human relationships, instruction, curriculum, and how students learn. The possession of a personal philosophy is an essential starting point and will more readily facilitate the unfolding of the remainder of the process.

It is important to note, however, that possessing a personal philosophy does not infer that it is not suceptible to modification. In actuality, principals in this study indicated that consideration of the beliefs and values of others is also a very necessary part of the process. While their core values remained relatively intact, principals recognized their own limitations and the strengths of their teachers and on many occasions referred to the value of incorporating the input of staff as part of the process. The implications are that principals should possess a firm personal philosophy but at the same time they should be conscious of and receptive to the beliefs, values, and strengths of others as often these collaborative efforts yield a synergistic effect.

The manifold ways in which principals enacted their role as instructional supervisors suggested that there was no preordained set of actions to which principals can subscribe. Rather, the contingent nature of the actions of instructional supervisors implies that principals should strive to familiarize themselves with as broad a range of supervisory options as possible. The greater choice of options will hopefully allow for a more appropriate match of actions to a particular situations.

All of the respondents referred to the heavy demands on their time in their role as principals. As part of their role of principal they identified instructional supervision as being an extremely important responsibility and one that requires time. However, they noted that often there are occurences requiring more immediate attention, thus resulting in their activities as instructional supervisors being delayed or overlooked. The implication from this situation is that principals need to plan for instructional supervision. In addition to the many routine acts that they perform as principals and instructional supervisors, they need to specifically schedule time for instructional supervisory activities. ie., classroom observations, one-on-one conferences with teachers. They must also maintain a stubborness about keeping this time for instructional supervision or it can be easily eroded.

Principals who were single administrators in their schools indicated that they felt a sense of isolation and that this condition constrained their effective functioning as instructional supervisors. Instructional supervision was seen to be a very demanding activity that "exacted a cost." Therefore, principals found it very beneficial to have opportunities to discuss their thoughts and feelings on matters concerning instructional supervision with other principals or assistant principals. This situation lends itself to implications for both the district and the principals themselves. The district should encourage the creation of opportunities for principals to get together and share their thoughts on the topic of instructional supervision. In addition to the sharing opportunities

provided by the district, principals should attempt to create their own collegial networks. They should make efforts to contact other principals and discuss matters related to instructional supervision and they should be receptive to calls that they might receive.

In addition, principals described the advantages of working with an assistant principal. The assistant principal was seen as someone who could share the workload, be sensitive to the school situation and act as a confidant and collaborative partner. The district should consider the value of having an assistant principal in every school as they can play a very important part in enhancing the process of instructional supervision.

For Future Research

While this study focussed on principals and their meanings and actions in relation to instructional supervision, it is also apparent that there are other participants who make important contributions to the process. Future studies might attempt to examine the perceptions of teachers, parents, students and district administrators to gain further insight about instructional supervision.

In addition, there are other components within this study that are worthy of consideration for further study. The aspects of principals developing and possessing a personal philosphy and the establishment of trusting productive teacher/principal relationships were seen to be vital components within the process of instructional supervision and hold possibilities for exploration in greater depth. Finally, supervising the retiring teacher seemed to create special problems for principals as instructional supervisor and this could be a useful avenue for further study as well.

Concluding Statement

The descriptive data provided by the respondents in this study served to illuminate my understanding of what instructional supervision meant to principals and how they enacted their role as instructional supervisors. Their candid, articulate descriptions carried me far beyond my original preconceived notions and helped me to recognize the concept of instructional supervision for the highly complex, value laden, integrative construct that it is. Additionally, the sharing of perceptions and thoughts through their eyes as principals has given me greater insight and sensitivity in regard to how they experience their role as instructional supervisors: the challenges, the rewards, the frustrations, the uncertainties, and the required skills, abilities, knowledge and attitudes.

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Appendix A

Correspondence

L. McElwain

December 14,1988.

Edmonton, AB

Dear _____,

Thank you for expressing a willingness to participate in my study. The area that I am exploring is the meanings and actions of the principal as instructional supervisor. The term instructional supervision may or may not be completely familiar to you at first glance because it is a term that can have many interpretations. To assist in understanding how it is being referred to in my study, it can be viewed as the activities that a supervisor undertakes to enhance the instruction, growth, and development of teachers towards the goal of improved learning for students. In a sense, the ambiguity of the term along with the importance of the supervisory function was what interested me in this area. The responsibility of supervising staff lies squarely on the shoulders of the principal, but as to what meanings and actions individual principals demonstrate for their supervisory role, there can be great variance.

In terms of your involvement, what I am asking for is your willingness to take part in an in-depth interview (approximately 1 hour in length) to give you an opportunity to share your thoughts about instructional supervision. For example, What does instructional supervision mean for you? What influences helped to shape this meaning for you? What do you do as an instructional supervisor? At this point, I'd like to assure you that my study is explorative, rather than judgemental in nature. That is, I am trying to find out "what is" rather than "what should be". The accurate recording and analysis of data would be greatly assisted by tape recording the interview. However, if this causes discomfort for you, feel free to decline the its use during the interview.

The interview will be transcribed and a copy of the transcription will be provided for your perusal. You may wish to add, delete, or modify any of your responses at this time. Following analysis of the data, I will forward a copy of the themes that appear to be emerging and upon completion of my study, I will provide you with a summary of my findings.

Your name, and the name of your school will remain confidential and will be only referred to in the most general sense in the study. ie., the principal, the respondent, or the school.

Thank you again for your expressed interest and involvement in this study. I hope the reflection and shared information will be of benefit for you as a result.

If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of the study, please feel free to call me at _____ (home).

Gratefully,

Les McElwain

Would you please complete the consent form and indicate your preference for the interview on the following page.

The Meanings and Actions of the Principal

as Instructional Supervisor

I give my consent to be a participant in this study.

_____

Signature

_____

Date

I am very willing to meet at a time that is most convenient for you (mornings, school times, evenings, holidays, etc.). For most effective use of your time, you may want to choose a time when there would be relatively few interruptions. Please indicate your preference(s) below and upon completion insert this page in the self- addressed envelope to _____ School. It can be sent by interschool mail. Upon receipt of this letter, I will call you back to confirm our interview time and place. Also, if your preferred meeting time is before or during the Christmas break, you may wish to contact me by phone (_____). Thank you.

Times that are preferable for you:

Day	Date	Time	Location

February 6,1988.

Hi _____,

Here is a copy of the transcript of our interview on instructional supervision. To date, I have done a preliminary review of the transcripts but hope to do a more thorough analysis in the ensuing months. Please feel free to add, change, or delete any of the information given in the transcript. I would like to make contact with you in late February or early March to give you the opportunity to share any further thoughts that you might have in regard to the transcripts or the topic of instructional supervision in general. This contact could be made by telephone or we could have another meeting if that is your preference. If either of these arrangements is not suitable, please call me at home at _____.

Please note the questions in the margins of the transcripts and on the back of this letter. Thanks again for your time and the valuable insights that you have provided.

Gratefully,

Les McElwain

Here are some articles that I have selected for you on the topic of instructional supervision. I have chosen these because they provide a sampling of the kinds of ideas that are forthcoming in this area, but by no means are they meant to be a comprehensive survey of the literature. Feel free to use these in whatever way you see fit (some people find that they make excellent fire-starters). If there is a particular area that you would like to find out more about, please let me know and perhaps I can be of some assistance.

Les

5/24/89

Dear _____,

Just when you thought you had heard the last of me. . . . I've recently completed a preliminary analysis of the data and have identified several themes that seemed to be contained therein. As promised, I am forwarding these findings to you. However, recognizing that you are very busy, instead of providing you with sixty pages of analysis, I have included summaries of my findings (one general overview and a more detailed point form summary-see following pages) for your perusal. The detailed analysis certainly will certainly be made available to you if you would like to read it.

To enhance the trustworthiness of my study, I would very much appreciate it if you would examine the summary of the data analysis and themes provided and share your appraisal with me. The following questions might serve to guide your response: Do you think the findings accurately reflect your understanding and the understanding of that you perceive that others might have for instructional supervision? Is there any aspect that you think has not been included? Is there anything that should be omitted? Unless you wish to do so, please don't spend an inordinate amount of time on your response. A simple response that recognizes the three questions would be just fine. Please indicate your preferred manner of sharing your comments on the following page.

I feel very fortunate and grateful to have had your willing and insightful participation in my study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the study, please don't hesitate to contact me (home phone _____). Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Response Sheet

Would you please complete the response sheet below and return it to me in the addressed envelope so that it reaches me by June 7, 1989. This will allow me time to make any neccessary revisions. Thank you.

Four ways in which you can share your appraisal with me: (please indicate your preference with a check mark)

____ 1. Please phone me at my school to discuss your findings.

____ 2. I would like to meet with you to discuss your findings. Please call me to set up an appointment.

____ 3. Please see my comments written below.

____ 4. I am sick and tired of your study. So please get out of my life.

Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If you would like a copy of the detailed data analysis, please indicate below:

yes ____

no ____

Summary of Data Analysis

Initially, the topic of instructional supervision was not easily portrayed in words by the respondents. However, during the course of our discussions as the eight respondents reflected upon their actions and personal experiences, the data compiled in a cumulative manner and resulted in a full and rich understanding of the notion.

There was not a particular definition of instructional supervision presented that all respondents agreed upon, but rather, each of the respondents volunteered their understanding of the concept based on their own experiences. Many principals stressed that the student formed the core of their understanding of the term and they talked about meeting the students' needs and student-centeredness. Their beliefs about the student often formed a philosophical foundation from which a vision evolved. Instructional supervision was not exclusive to the principal but included many other significant players as well: teachers, students, parents, consultants, specialists and senior administrators. The meaning of instructional supervision also included the notion of relationships between principal and teacher and between teacher and student. Within this notion the concepts of trust, honesty, respect, support, and reinforcement were presented. Respondents described the act of teaching and teacher growth as being essential parts of their understanding of the concept and professional development plans and activities were undertaken to encourage improved teaching and individual teacher growth. As well, principals included the task of fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum mandate in their meaning of instructional supervision. All of the respondents emphasized the importance of instructional supervision and some referred to it as being synonomous with their role as principal. One principal captured the all-inclusive aspect of instructional supervision when he described it as being "anything that has an impact on student learning."

Principals described manifold and diverse actions as instructional supervisors and their descriptions served to reinforce the complexity and magnitude of the concept. They described observing teachers and the teaching act in formal and informal ways as being a primary activity. At the same time, they recognized the importance of being observed themselves; being seen as appropriate models or being visible around the school. Principals also felt that clarifying goals and letting people know of their expectations were very important activities that helped teachers to focus their efforts. Another major activity undertaken by principals was that of facilitating teachers and instruction. This included such actions as providing psychological and resource support and creating conducive teaching/learning environments. Respondents indicated that instructional supervision did not just happen. It involved planning and organization and these were two other activities that principals demonstrated. Lastly, principals made efforts to encourage the involvement of others. They would delegate some of their responsibilities to others, encourage teachers to attend inservices, access consultants and specialists, provide growth opportunities for teachers, and make efforts to involve parents, the greater community and the support staff. Their descriptions of how they acted with teachers in crisis and beginning, excellent, and retiring teachers represented more specific actions related to each corresponding situation.

Principals presented many influences that helped to shape their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors. They talked about attitudes and skills that had been developed from previous experiences as being aspects that they "brought to the job". The expectations that others had of them and the expectations that they had for themselves also affected how they acted as instructional supervisors. Additionally, principals indicated that no two contexts were exactly the same and therefore different contexts required interpretations and actions that were unique to the particular situation.

Principals recognized that constraints and enhancers could influence their effectiveness as instructional supervisors and were a natural part of their job. They identified lack of time, a sense of isolation, unhealthy staff relationships and constraints of the greater system as factors that affected their performance as instructional supervisors in a negative way. In a similar fashion, they identified factors that addressed the perceived constraints as being enhancers of their effectiveness as instructional supervisors: school-based budgeting, positive staff relationships, system in-services, opportunities for sharing, assistant principals, and additional support staff.

To conclude, principals shared personal experiences to illustrate when they felt successful as instructional supervisors and when they did not. Measurable results, growth or non-growth of students and teachers, and programs were all mentioned when principals related their successes and non-successes. Their discussions in relation to their feelings of success or non-success incorporated many of the aspects from previous questions, and revealed the affective element of instructional supervision.

Summary of Themes

Embedded in the data gathered from the eight principals in this study, were several themes relating to their meanings and actions as instructional supervisors. The descriptive data indicated that principals possessed beliefs and values that formed a philosophical foundation from which their meanings and actions emanated. Their responsibility for meeting the needs of their students was a core value within all of the respondents' belief systems and provided the impetus for their actions as instructional supervisors.

Additionally, all of the respondents alluded to the notion of growth as being a desired objective within the process of instructional supervision, and they referred to the notion as occurring in various forms: academic, social, psychological, behavioural, cognitive, and physical. Growth was described as being important not only in terms of the student, but in terms of the teacher and the principals themselves.

The relationship between the principal and the teacher was seen by all of the respondents as being a critical component in the process. The interview data indicated that often this relationship was the determining factor as to whether principals realized success or not. Subsumed within this theme were the subthemes of permitting access, trust, attitude, collaboration and empowerment. Implicit in this theme was the notion that because instructional supervision was a process that involved a great deal of human interaction, it was more than a mechanistic set of tasks and behaviours; it was an affective activity. This was revealed by the wide range of emotion that pervaded our discussions, and was especially evident when principals discussed their successes and non-successes.

Lastly, many of the themes conflated to suggest that instructional supervision was an open, dynamic process that required the principals to be flexible and adaptable. Viewing the concept of instructional supervision in this way, allows us to understand the multiplicity

of meanings and actions manifested by principals as instructional supervisors and we gain a better sense of its complexity and integrative nature.

Point Form Summary of the Data Analysis

1. What does instructional supervision mean to you?

- very difficult to define
- complex, varied, all-encompassing nature
- a very important responsibility

To various respondents it means:

- principal/staff relationships
- professional development
- viewed within the larger context of the school
- what teachers do- pedagogy
- providing the environment or climate that allows teachers to teach
- being honest
- rewarding achievement of teachers, encouraging them
- having a sense of humour
- stretching the staff
- anything that has an impact on student learning
- working with teachers, parents, students
- bringing in expertise-ie. consultants
- exposing teachers to new ideas
- student-centeredness
- working to address the pro-social behaviour of students
- student/teacher relationships
- meeting the curriculum mandate
- students as instructional supervisors
- teachers as the curricular experts
- not solely the evaluation of teachers
- philosophy
- vision
- creative curriculum

2. What do you do as an instructional supervisor?

a) Observing Others and Being Observed

- observing teachers, classroom visitations
- performance review, performance evaluation
- responding to requests of teachers
- encouraging the involvement of teachers in the observation process
- covering classes for teachers, relieving teachers
- formal and informal visitations
- being visible, MBWA-managing by walking around
- modelling
- enhancing relationships
- being "calm in the storm"

b) Clarifying Goals and Expectations

- sharing and developing school philosophies or visions and expectations
- developing mission statements
- one-on-ones
- positive or negative interactions to reinforce expectations

c) Facilitating Teachers and Instruction

- ensuring teachers have the necessary resources
- providing psychological and resource support
- involving specialists, consultants, or other teachers
- sharing expertise
- listening
- providing extra time for teachers ie. using substitutes, covering classes
- let teachers know that they're valued
- create a conducive learning environment ie. improving the physical environment or removing discipline obstacles

d) Planning and Organizing

- planning and making time for visitations
- allocating money
- timetabling
- organizing grades and special programs

e) Encouraging the involvement of others

- professional development programs
- teacher effectiveness programs
- encouraging teacher growth - inservices, intervisitations
- delegation of responsibility
- providing opportunities for teachers to share their ideas with others
- involving parents, the greater communty, and support staff

f) New Teachers

- orientation- to school, to other staff members and resource people, expectations
- support, patience, positive interaction- buddy system, growing time

g) Excellent Teachers

- recognizing their great value
- showing appreciation and giving goodies
  - giving praise, reinforcement
  - providing sharing opportunities
  - supporting them in their novel endeavours
  - providing time for them
- respecting them as professionals

- allowing them to determine their own goals and professional development activities

h) Teachers In Crisis

- there is a sense of suffering for all concerned
- help them to recognize the problem
- utilize a process
    - make them aware of the problem
    - documentation
    - providing assistance
    - assessing progress
- an affective activity

i) The Retiring Teacher

- age does not necessarily signify competence or incompetence
- the retiring teacher experiencing difficulties is problematic
- maintaining a caring attitude is essential
- creating positions for them where their effect on students is minimized until they retire or move them toward early retirement
- visiting them often and providing support
- much respect for the competent retiring teacher
- creating opportunities for them to share their expertise

3. What are the influences that helped to shape your meanings and actions as an instructional supervisor?

- the preformed attitudes and beliefs that one brings to the situation
- the skills that one possesses
- the previous experiences that one had
    - personal experiences
    - teaching experiences
    - experiences as a student
    - administrative experiences
- learning from others- collegiality, lighthouse administrators
- inservices, conferences, retreats
- Teacher Effectiveness Program
- the expectations of others ie. associate superintendent
- the expectations that one has for oneself
- varying contexts

4. What conditions or factors enhanced or constrained your effectiveness as an instructional supervisor?

<u>Constraints</u>:

- lack of time
- magnitude of the job of principal

- lack of control over your agenda
- isolation- single adminstrator
- lack of support staff
- teacher entrenchment
- poor staff/ student relationships
- hypocritical system - lack of consistency between their actions and expectations
- lack of training
- lack of experience
- the large size of a school
- resistant teachers

Enhancers

- school based budgeting
- setting priorities- triage
- having an assistant principal
- opportunities for sharing
- collegiality
- teachers buying into the mission
- healthy teacher/principal relationships
- supportive associate superintendent
- the availability of knowledgeable consultants

5. When have you felt successful as an instructional supervisor? Not Successful?

Successful:

- observable growth in students
    - attitudinal growth
    - achievement tests - district and provincial
    - improvement in student behaviour
- positive feedback from students, staff, parents
- successful programs
- observing personal growth
- sense of working together with staff, students, parents
- developing effective communication processes
- observing growth in teachers

Non-Successful

- primarily with teachers in crisis
- when the welfare of students is being negatively affected
- when the welfare of teachers is being negatively affected
- having to "play games" with teachers
- putting great amounts of time and energy with a teacher in difficulty but to no avail
- in difficult political circumstances

Outline of Themes

1. Philosophy- a foundation for the meanings and actions of principals as instructional supervisors.
2. Responsibility for meeting the needs of students- a critical source
3. The Notion of Growth- a primary goal of instructional supervisors
4. Teacher/Principal Relationships- a vital component
5. Instructional Supervision is an affective activity
6. Instructional Supervision as an open, dynamic, adaptive process

Appendix B

Interview Guide Questions

Interview Guide Questions

1. Would you please provide a thumbnail sketch of your experiences as an educator from the time you started to where you are presently.
2. What does the notion of instructional supervision mean for you?
3. What sorts of activities do you do as an instructional supervisor? For example, "walk through" a typical day and describe some of the things that you do.
4. What conditions, factors or influences helped to shape your meaning of instructional supervision?
5. Would you please comment how how you would act (or have acted) as an instructional supervisor when faced with the following situations: a teacher in crisis; a beginning teacher; an excellent teacher; and a teacher near to retirement.
6. When do you feel that you have been successful as an instructional supervisior? Are their particular examples that come to mind when you reflect on feeling successful?
7. Are there experiences or instances that come to mind when you haven't felt successful as you would have liked to be.
8. Can you think of any conditions or factors that you feel have constrained your effectiveness as an instructional supervisor ?
9. Can you think of any conditions or factors that you feel have enhanced your effectiveness as an instructional supervisor?
10. Is there anything that you would like to share that you felt was relevant to our discussion but that we didn't cover?

Appendix C

Sample Transcript

L: Great. As I mentioned in the letter, the whole area that I'm looking at is instructional supervision, and just to maybe relieve or alleviate any anxiety you might have, it's a term that people have difficulty nailing down and that's one of the reasons why I'm trying to research it. When you hear the term instructional supervision, what does it mean for you as a principal?

R: Okay, instruction with the student is generally what I would perceive as instructional supervision. Supervising the instruction would mean going into classrooms, number one, and observing the teaching act. Observing the student role and how the two combine. In addition to the teaching part of it, instructional supervision would also include a curriculum mandate, Alberta Ed. mandate, to make sure the Alberta Ed. mandate is being expounded in your school and in addition to that, I think probably a third component would be ongoing--your teachers attending workshops, seminars. Ongoing upgrading, I guess, of the teaching staff to make sure that the instruction that happens in the school is efficient. And those kind of things you're talking about, teacher awareness of learning styles, co-operative learning strategies, all the teaching strategies that are involved. So instructional supervision, as I see it, Les, is a very broad field.

L: If you were to think of a regular day, take today for example, what sort of activities would you be involved in that relate to instructional supervision?

R: Okay...

L: Or even a typical month. . .just some of the things that you do.

R: Sure, okay. I think the obvious things are monitoring, management by walking about. First of all, just the hallways; secondly, into the classrooms; and thirdly, doing extended periods of time in a classroom. That would be in observing the actual teaching act then and the intercourse between teacher and student. The second thing is the planning. You have to plan for instructional supervision because you have to plan for teachers' awareness, teacher knowledge, and taking that knowledge and putting it into the classroom. So, professional development activity planning is one area that you'd have to have to look towards. Budget planning--you have to put your money where your mouth is. Are we into this for education for the kids, or are we into it for a new Xerox machine? You know, those kinds of things. And all those are decisions that have to be made and that are made every day. You have to get into planning workshops, seminars, allowing teachers the time to leave the school to visit other schools. We're doing a fine arts delivery project, for example. Teachers go and view other teachers teaching in their classroom and using dramatics, as an example. That's very much instructional supervision, because you want those teachers to gain those skills and to bring them back to your school and make sure that their instruction is better because of it. So you have to plan for those things. Not only set aside time, but money also. And that's why I mentioned budget. Organization, planning just the organization of the building, has to do with instructional supervision. I mean, you've got to decide hey, am I going to have a primary opportunity class, am I going to have split grades, are we going to have integrated classrooms with adaptation kids, or are we going to have separate entities? Are we going to have an academic challenge program, or in fact are we going to send those kids to District Center? All of those organization for instruction type things, ie. timetables, have to do with instructional supervision because you have to look down and road and say, "How's this going to affect the classroom? When I walk into the classroom, what am I going to see?" And you have a mindset about what you're going to see and you hope you end up seeing it and if you don't, then there's

something wrong with either your organization, or your planning, or there's something wrong with the teacher's planning and abilities. So it all has to do with supervision. (chuckle) You also can't separate all of the outside influences--let's say the parent influence, as an example. You can't separate the fact that parents have a mindset about what goes on in a classroom. And that's instructional supervision, too. So the parent phones you up and says, "You know, Johnny was talking about condoms today and I don't want Johnny talking about condoms." You know? So you have to give the parent the mindset of where the instructional supervision is:"And of course I know what's going on in my classrooms, ma'am; here's the curriculum and here's what we have done to plan for it; here's the background of the courses, the professional development that the teacher's gone through to prepare himself for that, and now he can teach about condoms. So you can relax. Johnny'll know all about condoms and probably use them for water balloons anyway."

(Laughter)

Like those kind of things. That's an outside influence that you can't negate. I don't know. Have I hit them all?

L: (Laughter) You hit a lot!

Maybe to just extend some of them...what sort of P.D. activities have you planned this year for your staff, or with your staff?

R: Professional development, the initiative, I guess, goes to the staff. I think that's the key and we push in certain areas. We've been pushing a little bit in co-operative learning because it is a peaking learning strategy, if you like. There's a lot of literature on it and there's a lot of people investing time in co-operative learning. So we've been doing quite a bit of that--pushing teachers in that direction.

L: Right.....gently, of course.

R: Of course! Oh yeah...subtly.

L: Well, the last two questions I've asked, you seem to have a very good idea as to what it is for you, and what sort of things you do. What factors, what influences helped you shape that meaning you have for instructional supervision?

R: Everyday reality. The pressures, there's always pressures. The pressures put on you, either by yourself or by others, or inferred pressures that you have that others are putting on you, I think, are probably the greatest motivating force for a principal. That's just my own opinion, of course. You know, I have a feeling that my boss wants me to be doing these things and expects me to be doing these things. Therefore, I do them. If I had the feeling that he thought that it wasn't important, I wouldn't be doing them. You know, I'd be occupying my time arranging extra curricular activities or something like that. Who knows? But you have to spend the time. You or somebody else that you've designated has to spend the time.

L: Has the system ever said to you, "This is how you should act as an instructional supervisor"?

R: Okay, I think there's a real direction with my associate. He has a focus and he has a vision, if you like, so I think it's pretty easy for me to feel these things. The language learning area is the one that, as you're familiar with, that my boss is keen on. And, of course, it applies to all curricular areas. So language learning. . . we have that focus then. We have it as a priority in the school and a budget priority, too, so the money is there. So I guess just by expending the time planning and expending the time and energy in making sure that the teachers know that that's what the focus should be. Then it just happens. It just happens. But if you don't have that vision. . . Our district, generally, has district priorities -a list of 9 of them that you could attack at any given second of the day and you'd be very scattered, very helter-skelter. You have to still have some direction and I think the best move that the system made was to narrow the priorities down to a choice in the school of three. When they did that, they said, "We understand that you can't do it with 9, so let's try for a focus of 3, so then you and your staff choose the focus." However, my boss says, "One of the things will be language learning." Right?

L: Right.

R: So, there is a focus for you and we get to choose the other two. We just look at our needs and it's an automatic two priorities that we deal with. And after that, it's simple. The focus is sort of set. It's interesting that you said, "What is the district doing?" Sometimes, I wonder if there is any instructional leadership from the superintendent and the Board level. I kind of doubt it. I think that they're too hung up in the everyday activities of those political positions. And I really doubt that there is instructional focus. There is, of course, a lot of different focuses and money is always a big one. Personnel, I think, is a fairly large focus that they have, that they always struggle with, anyway. But I think it takes that associate level to have a vision and then talk about it and then get the principals thinking that way. I really do. And, of course, when we get in the school, now I've got to take that vision to my staff so that the opening two days of school are probably the most important two days of the whole year. And so you plan to the nth degree for those two days to make sure that the staff realizes, "Hey, this is our focus. This is where we're going, this is our vision for the school, these are our priorities," You know, our objectives are set from those and then, I think people understand. And the reason I say that is because seeing new staff members come in, and I've had a lot of new staff members because of sickness and whatnot. Seeing new staff members come in, they waffle. They don't know where to set their path. They waffle so you've got to sit down with them and say, "Listen, here's what we discussed at the beginning of the year and here's where you should be going." And then they shake their heads and start out in some kind of a direction. But that's interesting.

L: Well, it's interesting that you talked about the new person, because that was one of my questions. If I were to discuss or ask you about four different types of teachers, and the four types would be a new teacher, which you started to discuss already, an excellent teacher, a teacher in crisis and a teacher near retirement, how would you instructionally supervise any of those four, and if you can think of specific instances where you'd had to work with them, maybe just describe what you did in those cases.

R: Okay well, I started with the new teacher aspect and you have to give them time to grow, the new teachers. And you have to visit them frequently in the classroom and give them some positives about what they're doing. The new teacher absolutely requires feedback. Otherwise they have no idea if they're doing good, bad or indifferent. Except

from the students' feedback. And if there is no parent feedback, which is our situation here, there's almost no parent feedback, even on the teachers who are excellent, the parents don't give them the positive strokes that they require. Then you have to get into the classroom and tell them what they're doing right.

The teacher that's close to retirement- I had a situation last year where I had a teacher in his second last year of teaching. The motivation there is very low--the motivation for the teacher. They've been in the business for a long time, the slightest provocation in the classroom causes them distress. You know, "How can you do this to me, I've been at it for so long!" kind of a thing, not realizing that they have to treat the class as if it's their first teaching assignment every year. The particular teacher that we had last year required a tremendous amount of supervision. . . .

Appendix D

Sample Journal Notations

November, 1988.

Some Assumptions:

- difficult to define instructional supervision
- There will be many different approaches to the many different aspects of the concept, but I also believe that there will be some commonalities.
- One of the commonalities will be that they develop their meanings from their own experiences.
- There will be both staff development and individual approaches
- More directive methods will be used with teachers with special needs (teachers in crisis) and indirect methods will be used with the excellent teachers.
- Their successes will be more teacher related than results related.
- Their least successful experiences would be with a teacher in difficulty. It would be very stressful.
- There will be much collaboration between the principal and teacher in the supervisory process.

December 14,1988

I have recently completed my first interview with _____ and feel very good about it. He was very articulate, reflective, and needed very little prompting. If all of the other interviews go as well, I will be fortunate. I would have liked to have visited him at his school to get a feel for it, however. Also, it would have been nice to gather some referential adequacy materials from his school. But the information that he provided me with certainly was excellent. He certainly left me the impression that he was a dedicated, progressive, caring, humanistic principal. Also he presented his experiences in a very

realistic manner-- all was not jaded or wonderful. The highs and lows were definitely portrayed.

January 10, 1989.

- It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience to visit _____ today at his school. He radiates energy, enthusiasm, humor, and has a very realistic outlook in regard to the principalship.
- His answers were very direct, honest, succinct and informative.
- It's obvious that he's proud of his school, confident about his accomplishments and happy to be doing what he's doing.
- His school is very warm, accepting, and visually attractive.
- He has a number of innovative programs happening and has a real sense of what his school is about and where it should go.
- He is very oriented toward the children of the school.
- The staff seem very comfortable, relaxed and satisfied with what is happening in their classrooms and school. They seem to have a very warm, open relationship with _____ as well.
- I talked to a few of the students while I was waiting and they seem very satisfied with what is happening in their school.
- He commented that the interview helped him to reflect on the topic of instructional supervision.
- sidelights: -conference room for students and teachers
  -student as instructional supervisor

January 11,1989.

- The interview proved to be very interesting.

- It started off a little tentatively because he didn't know what I was going to ask of him.
- He felt that instructional supervision was a very abstract term.
- As the interview proceeded, we both started to relax and the conversation became more fluid, natural.
- First comment was in regard to curriculum, then included T.E.P., relationships, experiences, delegation.
- He is a reflective person, articulate, insightful
- Some points:

    curriculm to start

    all consuming

    greater sharing needed

    delegation

    time and reality constraints

<u>February 2,1989.</u>

- Once again Hodgkinson's philosophy-in-action
- Possible theme: Instructional supervision is that enactment of a philosophy and that is why it is so difficult to define. It is so broad, so complex. All principals tended to end up talking about their beliefs in students and how they learn, roles of teacher, goals of education and human interaction. Principals seemed to feel that they have a limited understanding of the term perhaps because of the nature of the term. The question is limiting in itself. Can you simply define something that is in itself so complex? Does it really mean all those activities that are representative of the supervisors beliefs about instruction and supervision and how and what students learn?

Quick thoughts:

- representation of philosophy

- seems to be no clear direction from the central office.
- dependent on the context, personal beliefs, staff
- best left in a general sense to allow for subjective interpretation and enactment.
- constant seems to be what's best for the students.